PLANTS OF THE BIBLE

AND HOW TO GROW THEM

ALLAN A. SWENSON

DRAWINGS BY MARTHA LIMBO HEATH

-SEASONS-

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All Biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Designs for creating gardens of Biblical plants—herbs, fruits, and trees—as part of your home landscape were redrawn by Martha Limbo Heath from sketches prepared by landscape horticulturalist Peter Jon Swenson for this book.

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CHAPTER II

SEASONS OF THE BIBLE LANDS

Somewhere along the pathway through the centuries the idea has become prevalent that four seasons, spring, summer, fall, and winter, are a natural phenomenon. However, as any resident of northern states realizes when traveling through Florida, Southern California, or the southwestern desert areas of the United States, climates and seasons vary considerably.

Gardeners, many of whom have uprooted themselves and been transplanted by the requirements of employment or choice of retirement, also realize that horticultural zones vary considerably. Plants that thrive in warm, moist, or hot, dry southern areas are simply not suitable for northern climates. Not only are some plants extremely sensitive to slightly cold weather, many others, more tolerant, cannot survive the deep-freezing cold winters of northern gardens. Some, on the other hand, can survive but require an abundance of sun to bloom and bear fruit. Plants are conditioned to the climate and other growing conditions from which they have sprung. In this way they are much like people.

As Biblical scholars and budding botanists alike have tried to identify the plants of the Bible accurately, their lack of understanding of plant needs, especially climatic considerations, has led to errors in identification. Another failing has been that early writers from northern areas have tended to identify genus and species in terms of the similar families of plants which are native or introduced and acclimated to their areas. These are natural errors, of course, but nevertheless such determinations have often been repeated over the centuries.

To be successful in growing plants of the Bible, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of their cultural requirements. That should logically begin with an understanding of the land of the Bible, which, in reality, is a land of only two seasons. In truth, these two seasons are rather different from what you might expect. The "winter" is in reality the growing season, because it is the time of rain when plants are provided with the moisture they need to burst into bloom, to fruit and bear their harvests. It is the time when seeds sprout and rush to produce their plants, which in turn bloom, set seeds, and die, as annual plants must.

The land of the Bible, known through history geographically as Palestine, is today largely the modern state of Israel. This land is at the crossroads of three continents, Europe, Asia Minor, and Africa. It actually is more unique than this simple statement may indicate, for in that narrow strip of land much has occurred that has altered the flora of the area beyond what the climates and soils dictate.

From a map of the land of the Bible, you can readily see that it lies at the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea where Eurasia and Africa meet. In this restricted strip of land, woodland and desert meet and join the steppes between. Within this small area there are major variations in temperature and quantity of rainfall, two major factors in the development and support of the plant life that exists there. Countries much larger in land area, such as Great Britain or Spain, actually have fewer different plant species than exist in the land of the Bible. This chapter will explain some of the basic reasons for such a wide range of plants as they existed in Biblical times and as they grow there today.

The Holy Land was a part of the fertile crescent, one of the earliest centers of civilization. As few as fifteen thousand years ago, scientists estimate, the Holy Land was indeed a literal Garden of Eden, a land of milk and honey. Lush vegetation abounded and the fertile valleys, wooded mountains, and tropical oases provided abundant sustenance for those who lived there. As Moses led the children of Israel in their flight from bondage in Egypt through the wilderness, their goal was the Promised Land. Even then the land abounded in plenty. Times and the events that have transpired since have unfortunately greatly altered the look of the land. Fortunately, however, despite man's depredations against his neighbors and his environment, plants have been tougher and more resilient than we might suspect. That is most fortunate indeed for plants and man.

Perhaps to understand the plants of the Bible better, we should turn to the scriptures from the Old Testament and proceed through those passages to gain knowledge of the climate, the plants and how best to cultivate them today. From Deuteronomy 8:7–8 we can glimpse what the land of the Bible was: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of val-

leys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey."

Again in Deuteronomy 8:15–16, we can perceive how other parts of the land and its adjacent areas must have been: "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end."

These fitting descriptions amply described the land of olden days. There were indeed the deserts which had to be crossed and deserts exist there today, inhospitable to most plants except those few especially adapted to the harsh conditions of baking sun and sparse rainfall. But even in these deserts there is a time when plant life bursts forth. Anyone who has experienced the flush of spring in the southwestern deserts of the United States can realize that with even the relatively few drops of rain in spring, seeds await that time to sprout, rush to bloom, and then scatter their seeds in turn to await the rain of the coming year.

In the land of the Bible there were, and are, areas of great fertility. Through the ages, thanks to the ravages of imprudent cultivation, much of these areas have lost their productivity. In Biblical times, however, there were indeed vast woodlands of oaks and cedars, pines and palm groves, olive trees and many others. The climate for their renewed growth remains today, and with the reforestation efforts being undertaken, and attention to wise agricultural practices, woodlands and productive orchards again rise from the land. In time, with peace, it may again be a land of milk and honey.

There are three basic climatic zones in the land of the Bible. Each has its distinctive features, but these zones are not as clearly defined as you may expect. In fact, adjacent valleys may reflect the plant life of the Mediterranean Zone while the mountains between support the vegetation of the steppe.

In places the transition from one zone of verdant growth to a less prosperous area of plant growth is gradual, while in other areas the change is abrupt, plant life changing dramatically within less than a mile from lush beauty to virtual desert conditions. There is today, in the land of the Bible, much diversity and contrast for so small an area.

The three zones of the land of the Bible are: the Mediterranean Zone, characterized by a dry, not overly hot summer and winter months of rainfall; the Irano-Turanian Steppe Zone, with long periods of dryness and a scant ten inches of rainfall annually; and the Desert Zone, hot and arid, with negligible precipitation.

As you would expect, the Mediterranean Zone affords the most favorable conditions for plant growth. Rainfall in this zone ranges from

twenty to forty inches per year and occurs during the winter months. Temperatures rarely fall below freezing in this zone, but the dry period of summer serves as the dormant period for most plant life.

The rain that begins in late September to early October signals the beginning of the growing season. Scattered showers appear, developing into heavier rains during December and January and slackening during April. This warm, rainy winter season is the peak growing period for most crops, as well as the fruiting time for orchards, and blooming time for many of the flowers of the Bible lands. During the summer season, from May until September, rainfall is a rare occurrence. However, as horticulturalists explain, summer dews that collect during cool nights do provide moisture for plants. Total precipitation from these dews can be measured up to nearly ten inches during this apparently dry summer season.

Depending on the type of soil, amount of rainfall, and range of temperatures in the various parts of the Mediterranean Zone, you will find different types of vegetation. Both coniferous forests of pine and deciduous forests of oak are present, though not so common as in Biblical days. Terebinth and carob trees also are long rooted there.

The Irano-Turanian Steppe is basically a dividing zone that separates the Mediterranean Zone from the Desert Zone. Don't confuse the term steppe as applied here to the frigid steppes of arctic and near-arctic areas. The steppes of the land of the Bible are distinguished by their dryness rather than cold. Rainfall is sparse, seldom reaching ten inches annually. It occurs only during the winter season, from December to March. The remaining months are almost totally arid. This moisture factor is the key that influences plant life. Few plants can tolerate such difficult growing conditions, but annuals which can sprout, bloom, and reseed themselves in a short period do flourish. Not surprisingly, bulbous plants which can store nutrients in their enlarged roots or bulbs also are conveniently adapted for life in the Steppe Zone. Trees and bushes too have solved the difficulties of this area. They shed leaves in the dry time, much as deciduous trees in temperate climates drop their leaves in autumn as cold weather approaches.

Plants in this Steppe Zone, which actually is a relatively small area compared to the other zones, can burst into bloom at the appointed time. In winter and spring, the landscape changes dramatically from its drab, dry appearance. Bulbs send up their preformed leaves and blooms, which have been awaiting the signal of the rain. Annual flowers sprout and surge to take advantage of the short growing season, blessed by the moisture that the winter rains bring. Shrubs leaf out and bloom. In those areas favored by more ample moisture, vegetation blankets the land with foliage, fragrance, and color.

The time of this miracle of growth is brief. By late spring, the dry

weather forces the land back into its grayish, brownish drabness as growth slows and stops.

The third major zone is the Desert Zone. It is, for most of the year, a land devoid of plant life. During the long, searing heat of summer, even the hardiest life is stressed into submission. No plants appear, but their roots and seeds lie secretly, awaiting their brief chance at life and beauty. This Desert Zone has climatic conditions similar to those of the Saharo-Arabian Desert. In the Holy Land, the desert is bounded on the west by Sinai, which includes most of the Negev Desert. To the south, it circles round the Mediterranean and Steppe areas and finally links into the expanses of the Arabian Desert.

In this harsh desert, rainfall is negligible, as is typical of deserts everywhere. When rains come, often less than four inches annually, they may fall in one deluge in an afternoon. What does not erode more gulleys in the landscape is soaked up by the parched land itself. Plants have little chance of survival in these desert areas. However, the annual rainfall may be more kind, falling over a period of time, which can awaken the resilient, dormant desert flora from their sleep.

There is another zone—more a subzone—which is called the Sudanese. These are the oases, or islands of vegetation, which exist amid the desert areas. These pockets of vegetation are often hundreds of miles from what would seem to be their normal, tropical habitat. Some botanists believe these oases are the vestiges of former tropical jungles rooted in the ancient past. They only persist where scant moisture is available, trapped in the soil and rock strata far below the sun-baked surface of the land.

The nature of these zones dictates to a large degree the type of plants that can grow and survive in them. Since the land of the Bible also is the crossroads of three continents, a great diversity of plants can be found there. For some species it is the eastern limit of their existence. For others, the steppeland species in particular, it is the western boundary; and for others originating in Africa, the land of the Bible is the northern limit of their range. You also may be surprised to learn that because of the abrupt changes between zones in certain areas, in a given two-mile walk from Mediterranean through Steppe to Desert Zone you can find strikingly different types of vegetation, all in a morning's stroll.

As you read the scriptures, exploring the world of plants of the Bible, this understanding of the climate and conditions of the land can perhaps explain why such different types of flora can exist nearly side by side. It also explains why some identifications of plants in the Bible are not realistically accurate.

The amount of rainfall or lack of it in these zones is the key climatic factor that determines the environment which encourages some plants but deters others. As all plants must have sun, water, and nutrients to thrive,

the amounts of these elements account for both the diversity and success of plants that grow in each zone.

You may be surprised to realize that there is really no mention of four seasons in the Bible. In The Song of Solomon, 2:11–13 you will read, "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

You may search further, but even if you research through the Talmud, the Jewish Holy Book, you will find only reference to the two seasons of the Holy Land. Those are the growing period through harvest time and the time of the resting of the land. In effect, as you will learn from both the Talmud and the Bible, there are the days of sun and the days of rain.

It may seem confusing, but that fact remains true for much of the Mediterranean area. There are in some countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea longer growing periods than in others, but basically the zone has a two-season year.

Much of the productive soil of the land of the Bible is found in the valleys. That is especially true today after centuries of cutting of trees and woodlands from the hillsides. Overgrazing also has led to erosion of the slopes.

Since this is not intended as a book about the land of the Bible itself, nor a travelogue about the land today, perhaps little else need be said about the seasons there and the environment as it is changing even today.

However, for a clearer understanding of these plants of the Bible which you wish to grow, and for those of you who may someday enjoy a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a flow of the flora in their natural cycles is probably worthwhile. As gardeners, we should think in terms of the growing year. In the land of the scriptures, that growing year begins in October. It is perhaps most logical that the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, arrives in October. That marks the beginning of the growing year as the rains arrive to moisten the soil, stimulating the plants.

Along the streams and in the fields, on mountain slopes and elsewhere, the bulbs and corms of the well-designed bulbous plants begin to grow. Sternbergia flowers along with early crocus and narcissus. Tulips also raise their showy blooms, and anemones get ready for their time of flower.

By November, rains have begun their vital task, awakening the other dormant plants. Narcissi will be in their glory soon and crocuses dot the countryside. The cyclamen in its dazzling beauty blooms, and farmers, as they have for centuries, are busy in the fields.

In December the land has again turned verdant with the increasing

rains. Berries and fruits are maturing and ripening as the land, in all its glory, bears witness to the beauty that comes alive again.

During January, anemones begin their colorful display, their vivid reds and purples adding to the loveliness. Irises begin their displays, and hyacinths poke their stalks higher as they begin to open.

By February more trees blossom as the iris, anemone, and hyacinth add their color and their fragrance to the sweetly scented air. This is, for many, one of the most beautiful times in the Holy Land.

In March the large iris and the tulip, arbutus, lupine, and other lovely plants combine to carpet much of the countryside. Desert flowers, providing rain has been timely and gentle, burst into bloom. With the warming winds of March comes the stimulation that sets the wild annual flowers into action. Gardens, planted and tended lovingly as the rains of winter fell, are reaching their prime.

In May, poppies and thistles, lilies and the flowers that enjoy the warmth of summer bear testimony to the miracle of life. Other earlier plants by now have begun to set their seeds as those spring blooms are ending.

By June, depending on the zone, late summer flowers appear, especially the oleanders with their displays of pink blooms, as the summer heat begins to fade the earlier flowers. Vegetable and fruit harvests continue among the groves and in family garden plots alike.

By late July and August the hot, dry winds have again regained dominance over the land. Plants wither, and the land returns to its traditional dormancy without the blessing of the winter rains to nurse plants along.

In September the final resting period of many plants nears its end. Others, those that linger latest, set their seeds, while the plants that are the first to bloom await the first sprinklings of the coming rains.

With the approach of October the winter rains will appear again, as they have for centuries and centuries before. With them the cycle is completed and the land again will begin to bloom and bear.

There may be just two seasons in the land of the Bible, but the flora there survives and thrives. It is a land of deep significance and meaning, as the scriptures have so well said.

From this land have sprung the plants of the Bible. Through the ages they have sustained the people of Israel, and Jews, Christians, and members of other faiths who have traveled through the land.

Today much has changed, yet much is as it was so many centuries ago. The plants—the fruits and vegetables, the vines and trees, the herbs and flowers—fulfill their role each year. Now, with this new understanding of the land and seasons of the Holy Land, you too can enjoy their special significance more as you grow them in your home, your garden, school, or churchyard. Each has its own meaning to share with you.

Rev. Marge Ragona
1305 East Rock Spring Rd., Apt A
Atlanta, GA 30306
404-875-7878

SYLLABUS - INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

I. Sept. 21, morning: Chapters 1-3

Formation and Transmission of the Bible
Geography - Worksheet

2. Sept. 21, afternoon: Chapters 4-5

Patriarchy/Exodus/Land of Canaan
Israel and Judah

3. Oct. 12, morning: Quiz on Chapters 1-5

Chapters 6-8

Saul, David, Solomon
Zion Theology, Yahwistic History

4. Oct. 12, afternoon: Chapters 9-10

Prophecy
Isaiah and Assyria

5. Nov. 2 (9), morning: Quiz on Chapters 6-10

Chapters 11-12

Deuteronomy/Fall
Jeremiah and Ezekiel

6. Nov. 2 (9), afternoon: Chapters 13-14

Priestly History
Israel's Wisdom - Practical, Theological, Skeptical

7. Nov. 23, morning: Quiz on Chapters 11-14

Chapters 15-16

Persia/Hellenism
Hasmoneans/Rome

8. Nov. 23, afternoon: Chapters 17-18

The New Testament
Jesus - Gospels

9. December 14, morning: Quiz on Chapters 15-18

Chapters 19-20

Early church
Intro. to Paul

10. December 14, afternoon: Chapters 21-22

Matthew/John
Parousia/Gnosticism

Textbook: John Hayes: Introduction to the Bible, Westminster, 1971

Expectations: That you will read the text and the accompanying bible passages listed at the beginning of each chapter, and come prepared to take a short quiz on the previous session's material.

There will be one paper or a final take home examination; you may elect either. Whichever you chose will be received by one week following the final session -- that is 12/21 or sooner, or the grade will not be sent in to Samaritan in time for you to have your credits in time for the licensing timetable this year.

Suggested paper topics:

Jesus, our Passover.
MCC and the Exile (or Post-Exilic) community.
MCC as an apostolic church.

Or your own topic, but please clear it with me and discuss it with me.

You will be expected to elect a paper or an exam by the second session.

Appendix

SOME TOOLS FOR BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION
COMPILED BY DR. MONA WEST

USEFUL FOR: TRANSLATION COMPARISON OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES, EXPLANATION OF BIBLICAL TEXTS, READINGS ON BIBLICAL TOPICS, WORD STUDIES.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS (many are available on computer disk)

There are several good modern English translations that use the best ancient manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek to arrive at a clear and concise meaning of the biblical text. It is important to keep in mind that any translation is someone's interpretation of the best way to render a Hebrew or Greek word/phrase into English. For this reason, it is helpful to compare a particular passage in several translations in order to arrive at the range of meaning for a text.

Revised Standard Version (1952) A revision of the original work started in the King James and Authorized Version tradition. See especially The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha.

The New Revised Standard Version (1990) The latest revision in the Tyndale-King James tradition. The translation attempts to update the English by eliminating "archaic" forms, and eliminating masculine-oriented language relating to people. (Available in the Oxford edition mentioned above.)

The Jerusalem Bible (1966, 1988) English version of the French translation from the Hebrew and Greek by Roman Catholic scholars. The reader's edition contains detailed textual notes and interpretive information. Includes the deuterocanonical books (the Apocrypha).

The New English Bible (1970) A new translation produced by a group of scholars from the British Isles that included experts in both Bible and English literature. Uses elevated English vocabulary and style.

The Revised English Bible (1989) A revision of The New English Bible which attempts to tone down the "British character" of the English and is sensitive to the over-use of masculine oriented language.

The New American Standard Version (1971) A conservative response to the Revised Standard tradition.

The New International Version (1978) Produced by an international team of conservative Protestant scholars.

TANAK/The Holy Scriptures (1985) A translation of the Hebrew Bible from the traditional Hebrew text by the Jewish Publication Society.

BIBLE CONCORDANCES (available on computer disk)

A concordance will list every word of the Bible and tell you where it is found. Concordances are useful for "word studies" -- that is, discovering a particular pattern for the way certain words are used in the Bible. There is usually a listing of the Hebrew and Greek vocabulary of particular words used.

James Strong Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (1955) A concordance listing every word in the King James Version of the Bible. English words are keyed to the Hebrew and Greek in an index.

Eerdman's Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version and Apocrypha (1988).

Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Revised Standard Version (1957).

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

Dictionaries of the Bible contain selected articles on important topics for biblical study, as well as brief summaries of biblical books and brief descriptions of biblical characters. These dictionaries also have articles pertaining to archaeological discoveries and methods that are important for biblical study. The articles are written by different authors and many Bible dictionaries are multi-volume works.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (1962) 4 vols. plus supplement A scholarly encyclopedic dictionary designed for preacher, scholar, student, teacher and general reader based on recent discoveries and referring to both the King James and the Revised Standard versions of the Bible.

Harper's Dictionary of the Bible (1985) A one volume work with articles by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish scholars affiliated with the Society of Biblical Literature. One of the most up-to-date Bible dictionaries available.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1979) A 4 volume work reflecting the efforts of an international and interdenominational team of conservative scholars.

The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible (1990) A one-volume work by persons affiliated with the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion. The articles are well written and easy to understand, while at the same time scholarly in their approach.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary (1992) 6 volumes. A scholarly encyclopedic dictionary.

BIBLE COMMENTARIES

A Bible commentary will explain, in depth, each book of the Bible. This is usually done by printing the biblical text itself, noting any problem with translation of ancient manuscripts, offering historical and cultural background material on a biblical passage, and giving an explanation of the meaning of the biblical passage. Many commentaries are parts of multi-volume sets, while others are individual books written by scholars who are experts on a particular biblical book. Some commentary sets are incomplete -- that is, they will not have commentaries on every book of the Bible. Also, some commentaries will combine work on several books of the Bible into one volume.

The Interpreter's Bible (1957) A complete set on all books of the Bible. A guide and commentary to the Bible by some 125 scholars and preachers, prepared for the general reader, the teacher and the preacher. Includes long introductions with bibliographies to the whole three parts: (1) at the top, the King James version and the Revised Standard version are side by side; (2) in the center of the page is the Exegesis, with textual notes; (3) at the bottom of the page is a devotional Exposition on the text.

A revision of this landmark commentary is currently in process (The New Interpreter's Bible. Twelve volumes planned, two volumes will be available by 1995.

The Anchor Bible (1964) A more technical commentary set than the Interpreter's, this series is incomplete. Most of the books of the Bible have volumes devoted to them, including the books of the deuterocanon/Apocrypha. New volumes continue to be added (several in 1994-95).

Word Biblical Commentary (1980) A series in progress, many of the volumes are already in print. Includes recent traditional scholarship on biblical study.

Interpretation (1982) A Bible commentary for teaching and preaching. Practical, non-technical (but scholarly) commentary that helps preachers and teachers in their educational and homeletical work. New volumes continue to be added (Psalms in 1994), most books of the Bible completed.

Mercer Commentary on the Bible (1994) A one-volume commentary which is a companion to the Mercer Dictionary of the Bible. Designed to be non-technical and useful for the classroom.

Harper's Bible Commentary (1985) A one-volume commentary which is a companion to the Harper's Bible Dictionary.

The Women's Bible Commentary (1993) A one-volume commentary containing contributions from 41 women scholars. Each book of the Bible is introduced with a discussion of its critical issues and a narrative summary of the books contents. A commentary follows on those sections of the book that have particular relevance to women.

THE SONG OF SONGS AS SCRIPTURE FOR UFMCC

INTRODUCTION

When was the last time you heard a sermon on the Song of Solomon? You're not really going to read one now. What I want to share with you are my reflections on the Song and the ways I think it functions as scripture for our community.

Over the years folks haven't quite known what to do with the Song. It almost didn't make it into the Bible. God is not mentioned at all in the book, nor is any event of salvation history. Solomon isn't even the book's author. The book was associated with Solomon because he was known for his poetic compositions and his love of women. In reality, the primary speaker in the poems is a woman. It is very likely that the author may have been female.

The book is a collection of erotic love poems, pure and simple. (Read 1:2-3; 1:13-14; 3:1; 7:6-9.)

WHAT MAKES THIS SCRIPTURE?

Well, religious leaders claimed that the book should be read as an allegory. For Jews it is supposed to be an allegory of Yahweh's relationship with Israel; for Christians the book is an allegory of Christ's relationship to the church.

Maybe people haven't known what to do with the book because they haven't known what to do with human sexuality. The graphic, erotic, celebratory, nature of the poetry makes people uncomfortable. It's easier to talk about Christ and the church than lips and breasts and torsos and sexual smells.

Currently, theologians are reaffirming the book's emphasis on the erotic. In an age when we as human beings feel alienated from the world, God, each other, and our own bodies, the Song of Songs can help us celebrate our sexual selves and rejoice in our physical bodies.

That is exactly why I think this book has much to say to us in UFMCC. As "sexual minorities" and the sexually disenfranchised in a heterosexist patriarchal culture, this book speaks powerfully to us as the word of God.

Feminists have taught us that we should be suspicious of any thing/any text that does violence to our essential selves as persons created in God's image. That is why we spend so much time with those few passages in the Bible that mention homosexuality. Conversely, shouldn't we welcome with open arms those texts that speak to our essential selves as persons who have been created in the image of God as sexual beings?

Now you may ask, "How can the Song of Songs be scripture for UFMCC when it is clearly heterosexual love poetry?" I think it speaks to us as the word of God precisely because of its heterosexual context. As heterosexual love poetry, it transcends the strictures of patriarchal heterosexism. Love and sex are celebrated as ends in themselves--not as a means to marriage or procreation. Nowhere in the book are we told that the lovers are married, nor do they have children.

Nowhere in the book is one lover dominant over the other. The sin of sexism resulting from the fall in Genesis 3 is absent in the Song. The woman is equal partner with the man--seeking him out, beckoning him, describing his body, taking the initiative in lovemaking. The woman and the man are presented as mutual partners in relationship.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LOVE

The poetry of the Song indicates that the lovers did not have an easy time of overcoming barriers to their love.

1. They had to struggle against barriers of race and class: 1:5-6. The woman's self-affirmation in 1:5-6 is the first indication that not all is well with the love expressed in the Song. The identity of the woman is uncertain. She is different from the daughters of Jerusalem in two ways. Her skin is dark as a result of working in the fields, which may indicate her lower socioeconomic status. (Her darkness implies the fairer skin of the daughters of Jerusalem who stayed indoors.) There is also the possibility that her skin color may denote a different ethnic background than the Jerusalem daughters. The claims she makes about herself are not apologetic, but boastful: "I am black and beautiful."

2. Verse 6 of chapter one indicates that the lovers had to overcome the barriers of family. Here and in 8:8-9 we are told that the woman's brothers try to keep her bound by patriarchal attitudes that refuse to recognize a woman as free agent of her own sexuality. In 8:10 the woman responds by claiming the goodness of her own sexuality which overcomes these barriers: "I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; then I was in his eyes as one who brings peace."

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OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LOVE

The poetry of the Song indicates that the lovers did not have an easy time of overcoming barriers to their love.

1. They had to struggle against barriers of race and class, 1:5-6. The woman's self-affirmation in 1:5-6 is the first [illegible] that [illegible] goes well with the love expressed in the Song. The "darkness" of the woman is [illegible]. She is different from the daughters of Jerusalem in two ways. Her skin is dark as a result of working in the fields, which may indicate her lower socio-economic status. (Her darkness implies the leisure class of the daughters of Jerusalem who stayed indoors.) There is also the possibility that her skin color may denote a different ethnic background than the [illegible] Jerusalem daughters. The claims she makes about herself are not apologetic, but beautiful: "I am black and beautiful."

2. Verses [illegible] also indicate that the lovers had to overcome the barriers of family. Here and in 8:8-9 we are told that the woman's brothers try to keep her bound by patriarchal attitudes that refuse to recognize a woman as free agent of her own sexuality. In 8:10 the woman responds by claiming the goodness of her own sexuality which overcomes those barriers: "I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; then I was in his eyes as one who brings peace."

3. The lovers also had to overcome societal norms. In 3:1-4 the woman puts herself at considerable risk seeking the beloved in the city streets during the middle of the night. She searches for him again in 5:2-7 but this time the sentinels of the city beat her when they find her. By patriarchal society's standards she is not to be out in the middle of the night, alone, taking the initiative, seeking her beloved. (I can't help but wonder about the parallels in our own society concerning the safety of unaccompanied women in the city streets at night.)

These situations speak to our community as we struggle to overcome the same barriers which would keep us from expressing our love to one another.

The lovers' words to us in 8:6-7 ring true to our experience--they come to us as word of God: "love is as strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of their house it would be utterly scorned."

CLAIMING THE SONG FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Because the Song of Songs transcends the strictures of heterosexism and sexism, a way is made to celebrate love in all its forms, in all its variety:

1. There is reference to the smell and moistness of the woman which culminates in oral sex: 4:13-5:1.

2. Manual stimulation, penetration, and the sexual response cycle are alluded to in 5:2-6.

3. And of course, no erotic love poetry would be complete without the missionary position: 2:6;8:3.

The Song is word of God for us because it presents us with a variety of sexual behavior that is celebrated as good. It is sex enjoyed without shame, guilt, or the fear of disease.

Finally, the Song functions as scripture because it leads us to delight in our bodies and relate to all of creation. Throughout the Song the lovers describe one another with images taken from everyday life in Palestine. Body parts are compared to precious jewels, ornate architectural structures, luscious fruit. This delight in the physical body is a far cry from the shame the man and woman felt in Genesis 3 when they knew they were naked before God and each other.

With their physical bodies not only do the lovers experience each other, they also experience creation as they make love in the open countryside, celebrate spring (2:10-13), search for one another among flora and fauna, and eat nuts and fruits to sustain them in between their lovemaking.

James Nelson has said that the reality of our existence as sexual and spiritual beings in this world is that we live between two gardens: the Garden of Eden with the results of human disobedience being manifested in alienation, shame, and sexual dualism; the Erotic Garden of the Song which provides us with a vision of mutuality and a freedom of sexual expression without fear and guilt.

The good news is that God has come to be with us in the flesh. God is with us in our flesh. In our sensuous, lusty, all-shapes- and-sizes, desirable, flesh.

"Jesus as Christ is our faith community's paradigm, our living symbol of God's ongoing embodiment--and of the possibility of our being, in some measure, body-words of the divine love." (Nelson)

As followers of the Christ, we flesh out the word of God. Straining and groaning with all of creation toward that vision of the Erotic Garden.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SUSANNA

1. Summarize the "message" of the book of Susanna. If you were to preach a sermon on this book (or a part of it) what would be your main point?

2. Why do you think some Jews (and Christians) considered this book "authoritative"?

3. Based on the contents of the book and what you know about the canonization of the Old Testament, why do you think it was "left out" of the Hebrew canon?

4. If you had been at the Council of Jamnia, would you have "voted" to include Susanna in the canon? Why? Why not?

5. How is the process of canonization related to the inspiration of scripture?

READING QUESTIONS FOR GENESIS 1 AND 2

READ GENESIS 1:1-2:4a

1. What is the state of the world at the very beginning of the creative process? If you were to draw a picture of verses 1 and 2 what would it look like?

2. Make a list of what is created on each of the first six days. Look at your list of each day's creation. Can you see any logic to the order? The first day concerns light and darkness; so does the fourth day. In what ways might the second and fifth days also be similar to each other? The third and sixth days?

3. Certain phrases are repeated for almost every day and every creative act. What are they?

4. Make a list of the verbs that describe what God does. Consider the verbs describing God's actions. What sense of the personality or character of God do you get from these words and other details? What seems to be God's relation to the world and its creatures?

5. What does it mean to be created in the image of God in this story?

6. What would you say is the main point of this story of creation?

READ GENESIS 2:4b-2:25

1. What is the state of the earth at the beginning of this narrative and how does it differ from the state of things when creation begins in 1:1?

2. According to this part of Genesis, what is the order of the creation of the world? How does the order of creation in this story differ from the first story?

3. What new verbs, not used in part one, describe God's actions in part two? Make a list of the new ones. Look at your list. What new sense of the personality or character of God do you get from these words and other details of the story? How does God seem to relate to the world and its creatures in this story?

4. How does the creation of man and woman in chapter 2 differ from the creation of male and female in chapter 1? How would you explain this difference?

5. What would you say is the main point of this story of creation?

QUESTIONS FOR GENESIS 1 AND 2

READ GENESIS 1:1-2:4a

1. What is the state of the world at the very beginning of the creative process? If you were to draw a picture of it, what would it look like?

2. Make a list of what is created on each of the first six days. Look at your list of each day's creation. Can you see any pattern in the order? The first day contains nothing during one day. The second day contains only one thing, the second and fifth days also contain one thing each day. Is there a way to explain why God chose to do things in this order? Why do the second and fifth days also be alone to each other? This time is not a day?

3. Certain things are created for each day and every creative act. What are they?

4. Make a list of the verbs used during the six days. Compare the verbs describing God's actions. What sense of the personality or character of God do you get from these words and other details? What does this say about God's relation to the world and its creation?

5. What does it mean to be created in the image of God in this story?

6. What would you say is the main point of this story of creation?

READ GENESIS 2:4b-25

1. What is the state of the world at the beginning of this narrative and how does it differ from the state of things when creation is complete in 1:31?

2. According to the plan of Genesis, what is the order of the creation of the world? How does this order of creation in this story differ from the first story?

3. What new verbs are used in this one, based on God's actions in each day? Make a list of the new verbs. Look at your list. What new scenes in this personality or character of God do you get from these verbs and the sketch of the story? How does God seem to relate to the world and its creatures in this story?

4. How does the creation of man and woman in chapter 2 differ from the creation of male and female in chapter 1? How would you explain this difference?

5. What would you say is the main point of this story of creation?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. In your opinion, are these two different stories of creation? If so, how do you reconcile their differences? If not, how do you explain their differences?
2. What claims do each of these stories make about humankind's relationship to the created order?
3. How have these stories been used against the gay and lesbian community?
4. How might we reclaim them for our community?

READING QUESTIONS ON THE CULTURE OF THE ANCESTORS
GENESIS 24-36

**When answering these questions, give chapter and verse numbers from the biblical text to support your answer.

1. Based on your reading of Genesis chapter 24, how would you describe the marriage customs of the ancestors?

2. How would you describe the customs mentioned in Genesis 25 and 27? What was the role of the oldest son in this society? Why was Esau so mad that Jacob had tricked him in both situations? Why does Rebekah help Jacob trick Esau and Isaac?

3. Describe the role of women in these ancestor stories--give specific examples. How were women valued in this society?

4. Using what you know about marriage, the value of sons in this society, and the role of women in this society, how would you explain Genesis chapter 30?

5. Based on your reading of chapter 31, do women have inheritance rights in this society?

6. What is the significance of "marrying within the clan/family" in chapters 24, 26, 27, 28, 29.

7. What are the similarities between chapters 24 and 29?

8. Based on your reading of Genesis 24-36, describe the religion of the ancestors.

READING QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH

Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, answer the following questions.

1. Who are the main characters in the book? What is the complicating action of the story--what is the problem to be solved? How is this problem solved and by whom?

2. Read Leviticus 19:9-10, Leviticus 25:25-28, and Deuteronomy 25:5-10. How and where are these laws mentioned in the book of Ruth? How do they affect the plot of the story?

3. How would you interpret Ruth's decision to return to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi? Why did she insist on returning to Bethlehem with Naomi? Some Old Testament interpreters have compared Ruth to Abraham. Why do you think they make this comparison?

4. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Ruth as a character/person?

5. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Naomi as a character/person?

6. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Boaz as a character/person?

7. Why do you think the son born to Ruth and Boaz was considered the son of Naomi in 4:14-17?

8. Summarize the main point of the book of Ruth.

9. How could the book of Ruth provide a positive "ending" or balance to the book of Judges? How might we talk about the book as a "bridge" between the period of the Judges and the beginning of the monarchy? (Note the genealogy at the end of the book.)

10. In what ways can the story of Ruth serve as a paradigm for the gay and lesbian community?

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH

Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, answer the following questions.

1. Who are the main characters in the story? What is the significant action in the story—what is happening to the people? How is the relation between and by, with?

2. Read I Samuel 18:3-10, Deuteronomy 25:5-10, and Deuteronomy 25:5-10. How are these laws reflected in the book of Ruth? How do they affect the plot of the story?

3. How would you explain in 50 words or less to a friend in Bel Air why that modern-day Naomi? Why did she travel on a relatively inexpensive ship? Name Old Testament lineage along the Orange Road in Anaheim. Why do you think God made this comparison?

4. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Ruth as a character? Why?

5. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Naomi as a character? Why?

6. Based on your reading of the book of Ruth, how would you describe Boaz as a character? Why?

7. Do you think the relation of Ruth and Boaz was consistent with the law of Moses? Why?

8. Summarize the main point of the book of Ruth.

9. How could the book of Ruth be a positive "reading" or sermon to the book of Judges? How might we link Ruth's story as a "bridge" between the events of the Judges and the story of King David? (Note the genealogy at the end of the book.)

10. In what ways can the story of Ruth serve as a parallel for the gay and lesbian community?

READING QUESTIONS ON 1 SAMUEL CHAPTERS 1-13

1. 1 Samuel 1 describes how an Israelite family, toward the end of the period of the judges, went to worship at Shiloh. Describe these visits on the basis of this chapter. Who went, and how often? What did they do there? Who was in charge at Shiloh? How was Yahweh's presence represented there, according to 1 Samuel 3:3?

2. Compare Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10) with the "Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55. What ideas occur in both passages?

3. 1 Samuel 2:27-36 describes how a "man of God" says that the priesthood will pass from Eli's house to another priestly house. Analyze the main ideas in the man's speech. What ideas occur before the word "therefore" in verse 30? What ideas occur after this word?

4. What happened to the Philistines when they captured the ark of Yahweh (1 Samuel 5)? What did the Philistines do with the ark (1 Samuel 6)? What were the five cities of the Philistines (1 Samuel 6:17)? What happened to the Israelites when they looked into the ark (1 Samuel 6:19)? Can you think of any explanation for this?

5. According to one theory, two separate accounts have been combined in 1 Samuel 7-12 to describe the selection of Saul as king. Read the "Saul Source" in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16; 11:1-15. Why does Saul go to Zuph, about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem? What terms are used to describe Samuel in chapter 9? What does Yahweh tell Samuel to do? Where does Samuel anoint Saul as prince over Israel? Where do all the people make Saul king?

6. Read the "Samuel Source" in 1 Samuel 7:3-8:22; 10:17-27; 12:1-25. What functions does Samuel have? Who takes the initiative in asking for a king in 1 Samuel 8? Why? Does Samuel approve? Does Yahweh approve? How does Samuel describe their existence under a king? Where is Saul chosen as king?

7. If there are two different accounts of the founding of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 7-12, how do you think they arose? Why do you think later editors included them both?

8. Compare 1 Samuel 8:10-18 with the following passages which describe conditions later under king Solomon: 1 Kings 4:1-7; 5:1-14; 9:20-22.

9. What is the difference between a covenant people and a nation? How does Samuel attempt to combine these two ideas in his speech in 1 Samuel 12:12-25?

10. When Israel made the transition from tribal confederation to monarchy, what did it gain? What did it lose?

READING QUESTIONS ON DAVID
(1 SAMUEL 17-20; 2 SAMUEL 1-18)

1. The familiar story of David and Goliath is told in 1 Samuel 17:1-58. Why is it significant that Goliath was a Philistine? To whom did David attribute his victory?

2. For another reference to Goliath, see 2 Samuel 21:19 and 1 Chronicles 20:5. Can you think of any reason for these different accounts?

3. Based on your reading of 1 Samuel 18-20, how would you describe the relationship between Jonathan and David? Does David's lament over Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1:26 indicate that the relationship may have been homosexual?

4. According to 2 Samuel 2:1-4, where did David first become king? Over what part of the country? According to 2 Samuel 5:1-5, who else asked David to be their king? If David became king over the whole country in two separate stages, what do you think he would have to be careful to do?

5. Why was Jerusalem known as the city of David, according to 2 Samuel 5:6-10? Why was it a good site for his capital?

6. Where did David install the ark, according to 2 Samuel 6:1-15? Why do you think he did this?

7. 2 Samuel 7:1-29 describes the beginning of the "royal theology" or the Davidic covenant. What does David want to do? What are the two meanings of the word "house" in this passage? What promises does Yahweh make to David?

8. What were some of David's military accomplishments, according to 2 Samuel 8:1-18?

9. Which two of the Ten Commandments did David violate, according to 2 Samuel 11? What was the point of Nathan's parable in 2 Samuel 12? What effect did it have on David? How does this incident illustrate the relationship between the Davidic covenant and the Sinai covenant (10 commandments)? On what did the prophet Nathan base his authority?

10. According to 2 Samuel 15, how did Absalom seek to replace his father (David) on the throne? Why do you think he went to Hebron? When David fled from Jerusalem, how did he arrange to receive information?

5. READING & DISCUSSING DAVID
(1 SAMUEL 17-20; 2 SAMUEL 1-18)

1. The familiar story of David and Goliath is told in 1 Samuel 17:1-58. Why is it significant that Goliath was a Philistine? To whom do David attribute his victory?

2. For another tale of adversity in Goliath, see 2 Samuel 21:19 and 1 Chronicles 20:5. Can you think of any reasons for these different accounts?

3. Based on your reading of 1 Samuel 18-20, how would you describe the relationship between Jonathan and David? Does David's servant over Jonathan in 2 Samuel 19:31 indicate that the relationship may have been homosexual?

4. According to 2 Samuel 2:1-4, where did David first become king? Over what part of the country? According to 2 Samuel 3:1-5, what does David have to do first? If David became king over the whole country, as we expect, what do you think he would have to do to do so?

5. Why was Jerusalem known as the city of David, according to 2 Samuel 5:6-10? Why was it a good site for the capital?

6. What did David build there, according to 2 Samuel 5:11? Why do you think he did so?

7. 2 Samuel 7:14 contains the beginning of the "Royal Ideology" of the Davidic dynasty. What does God tell to do? What is the two meanings of the word "father" in this ideology? What problems does Yahweh relate to David?

8. What was some of David's military exploits, according to 2 Samuel 8:1-18?

9. What was the Ten Commandments that David violated, according to 2 Samuel 11? What was the point of Nathan's parable in 2 Samuel 12? What effect did it have on David? How does this story illustrate the relationship between the Davidic covenant and the Sinai covenant (i.e., conditionality)? On what day the prophet Nathan does his ministry?

10. According to 2 Samuel 16, how did Absalom seek to replace his father (David) on the throne? Why do you think he went to Hebron? When David flees Jerusalem, how do he arrange to return to the city?

11. When David's army fought to regain his throne, what instructions did he give concerning Absalom (2 Samuel 18)? What happened? How did David react?

12. How are the events in 2 Samuel 15-18 a fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy in 2 Samuel 12?

READING QUESTIONS ON PROVERBS 1-9

1. What is a proverb? List all the modern day proverbs that you know or have heard. (e.g. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away.")

2. What is the purpose of a proverb? What is its function in life? Why do they exist?

3. Read through Proverbs chapters 1-9 and mark the occurrences of the word "wisdom." Write out a definition of wisdom that would account for all the references you marked.

4. Compile a list of terms/phrases used in parallel with wisdom (e.g. in Proverbs 2:10 the term "wisdom" is in parallel with "knowledge"). How does this list add to your definition of wisdom?

5. Who is teaching whom in these chapters? What social context(s) do these proverbs imply?

6. List some key terms/themes of the teaching of the proverbs found in chapters 1-9. Notice the references to the term "life" (2:19; 3:13-18; 5:6; 8:35). What are these passages saying about life? What are the characteristics of life, according to the book of Proverbs?

7. Read Proverbs 8:1-36. Who is speaking in this section?

8. Describe Wisdom's role at creation in Proverbs 8:22-31.

9. How would you explain the images of Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly? Why are they female? How might this imagery relate to the social setting of wisdom teaching in the Proverbs 1-9?

10. In passages such as 3:13-18 and 4:5 & 7, the student is told to search for wisdom, or to get wisdom. How do you interpret the initiative of Woman Wisdom in chapter 8 in light of these passages?

11. Read John 1:1-18 in the New Testament. What are the similarities/differences between Jesus as the Word in John 1 and Woman Wisdom in Proverbs 8?

READING QUESTIONS OVERVIEWS 1-9

1. What is a proverb? (Give at the minimum only proverbs that you know or have heard (e.g. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away")

2. What is the purpose of a proverb? What is its function in life? Why do they exist?

3. Read through the proverbs chapter, 1-9 and make the statements of the word "wisdom." (Write out a definition of wisdom that is useful for the remainder of the course.)

4. Choose a list of 3 proverbs (one chosen at random) with words in (e.g. in Proverbs 1-9 the form "wisdom is to parallel with ___ (or ___)"). How does this list add to your definition of wisdom?

5. What are "wisdom" and "folly" personified? What social contexts do these personifications imply?

6. List some key terms or phrases in the "beginning of the proverbs found in chapters 1-9 (choose the references to the term "wisdom" 2:2-18, 3:13-26). What are these passages saying about that? What are the characteristics of this, according to the book of Proverbs?

7. Read Prov. 8:22-31. Who is speaking in this section?

8. Describe the "Adventure" motif at creation in Proverbs 8:22-31.

9. How would you explain the concept of Woman Wisdom and Wisdom's Folly? What are they supposed to represent? How are they related to the social setting of wisdom literature in the Proverbs 1-9?

10. In passages such as 3:13-18 and 4:5 & 7, the student is told to search for wisdom as if it is a treasure. How do you think that the attributes of Wisdom contribute to the search in light of these passages?

11. Read John 1:1-18 in the New Testament. What are the similarities between Wisdom as the Word in John 1 and Woman Wisdom in Proverbs 8?

BEGINNING QUESTIONS ON PROPHECY

1. What do you think of when you hear the word prophet or prophecy?

2. How do prophets look and act? What is "typical" prophetic behavior?

3. What does it mean to call someone a prophet? How does a person become a prophet?

4. What are some ways we hear or see the word "prophecy" used today?

5. How would you describe the Old Testament prophets? How many can you name? (name them below)

6. Are there prophets today like there were in biblical times? If so, who are they? Do you know any prophets?

READING QUESTIONS FOR ISAIAH CHAPTERS 1-12

1. Isaiah 6 describes Isaiah's call to be a prophet. Where did this occur? Do you think there is any connection between "King" in verse 1 and "King" in verse 5? How did Isaiah react to his sense of the holiness of Yahweh? What happened? Do you think the ideas in verses 9-10 indicate the purpose or the consequences of Isaiah's ministry?

2. Isaiah 1-5 contains sayings from Isaiah's early ministry, in the years after 742 B.C. What does Isaiah think of the people of his time, according to 1:2-6; 2:6-22? Why?

3. What does Isaiah think of the people's worship, according to 1:11-17? Why?

4. What criticisms of conditions in society does Isaiah make in 1:21-23; 3:13-15; 5:8-12, 22-23?

5. What does Isaiah want people to do, according to 1:16-17?

6. Does Isaiah think the people can be forgiven, according to 1:18-20? Does he indicate whether he thinks this is probable?

7. What titles for God does Isaiah use in 1:4, 9, 24; 2:12; 3:1, 15; 5:9, 16, 19, 24?

8. In the "Song of the Vineyard," 5:1-7, Isaiah apparently takes a popular song of the day and develops it into a parable about Yahweh and Israel. What did Yahweh expect from Israel? What did he find? Note the play on words in verse 7: justice (mishpat), bloodshed (mispach); righteousness (tsedaqah), cry for help (tse'aqah).

9. Much of the material in Isaiah chapters 7-10 reflects the Syro-Israelite crisis of 733-732 B.C. Assyria was expanding southward along the Mediterranean coast; Syria and Israel formed a coalition to defend themselves; they also attacked Judah to replace king Ahaz by an anti-Assyrian puppet king. Ahaz, weak and vacillating, did not know what to do. What advice did Isaiah give him, according to 7:1-9?

10. The Immanuel passage, 7:10-17, also reflects the Syro-Israelite crisis. How old do you think the child must before he knows the difference between right and wrong (v. 16)? Before this happens, what relief will come to Judah? What disaster will follow?

11. Several interpretations of Immanuel ("God is with us") are possible: (1) Isaiah referred to the boy's childhood as a way of measuring time; (2) Isaiah was thinking of the next king, Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.); (3) Isaiah was predicting the birth of Jesus some seven centuries later (Matt. 1:23). Which interpretation or interpretations do you agree with? Why?

12. The account in 2 Kings 16 tells how Ahaz reacted at the time of the Syro-Israelite crisis. Did he take Isaiah's advice? What did he do?

13. What are some of the characteristics of the ideal king, according to the poems in 9:2-7; 11:1-9? Is it possible that Isaiah originally composed these poems in honor of Hezekiah?

14. How would you summarize the important ideas that Isaiah expressed in his ministry?

READING QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF AMOS

1. What was the economic, religious, and political climate in Israel during the time of Amos' prophetic ministry?

2. Describe Amos as a person. How did Amos become a prophet? How did Amos perceive himself as a prophet? (Support your answers from the biblical text. Give chapter and verse numbers.)

3. To whom is Amos' message addressed?

4. What were the reasons for God's judgment upon Israel and what was God going to do to Israel? (Cite specific examples from the text.)

5. What techniques does Amos use to get his message across? Note different kinds of literary forms, images, theological concepts--cite specific examples from the text.

6. How does Amos express the power of Yahweh?

7. How does Amos talk about Yahweh's relationship with Israel?

GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL ESSAYS

The purpose of these essays is to provide an opportunity for the student to reflect on, and synthesize, the reading and class discussion for a particular topic in the course.

The essays should be graded using the following criteria: originality; integration of assigned readings and class/small group discussions; personal reflections; over-all organization and presentation of topic.

Below is a list of essay topics. Choose two from two different units.

FROM UNIT I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Use the terms, "canon" and "canonization" to explain what the Old Testament is, how we got the Old Testament, and why we should study it.

FROM UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

1. Based on your reading of Genesis 1-11, explain these chapters as stories of creation and uncreation. According to these chapters, what does it mean to be a human being in the world?

2. Write an essay on "Exodus and the Paradox of Freedom". Include some of the following: Israel's experience in the wilderness; significance of the exodus theme for liberation movements today; implications of the possibility that the Pharaoh could have been black; significance of the exodus theme for gay and lesbian people.

3. Write an essay on "The Paradox of Knowing God's Name". Include: the meaning and pronunciation of YHWH; the first and third commandments; handout and discussion from The Color Purple; MDB articles on inclusive language/names for God.

4. Write an essay on "Moses' Experience of the Paradox of Freedom". Include: paradoxes surrounding his birth, the meaning of his name, function of the plagues, relationship to God, relationship to the people, the challenge of his authority in the wilderness.

GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL ESSAYS

The purpose of these essays is to provide an opportunity for the student to reflect on, and synthesize, the reading and class discussion on a particular topic at the close.

These essays should be prepared using the following guidelines: conceptual, philosophical or theological, and literary analysis/critical discussions, citations/reflections over assigned readings, and application of topic.

Each is a full or a very topic. Choose two topics per unit.

FROM UNIT I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Use the terms "canon" and "canonization" to explain what the Old Testament is, how we got the Old Testament, and why we should study it.

FROM UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

1. Based on your reading of Genesis 1-11, explain these statements as states of creation and understanding. According to these chapters, what does it mean to be a human being in the world?

2. What is meant by "Jacob and the Paradox of Freedom"? Include some of the following: Jacob's story in the wilderness; implications of the exodus theme; the possible multiple meanings of "blessing"; implications of the fact that Israel could have been treated equally well at the exodus theme for gay and lesbian people.

3. Write an essay on "The Paradox of Kin, Using Good's Name". In it, the meaning and consideration of "YHWH, the God and Lord's commandments" in Deuteronomy 6 in *The Covenant*, Mark 12, and/or *Ruth*.

4. Write an essay on "Moses' Encounter of the Paradox of Freedom". In it, the panel, exploring the meaning of this name in relation to the reading of the passage, relationship to God, relationship to the people, the challenge of his authority, the "other" case.

FROM UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

1. Relate the different theories of Israel's possession of the land of Canaan to Yahweh's command to live responsibly in the land. How do these theories influence the way we live in the land today?

2. How is the biblical tradition of land interpreted in "third world" countries? In the United States? What are some advantages and disadvantages to these interpretations?

FROM UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

1. Discuss the significance of kingship in Israel. Why did some people resist kingship? What are some of the theological arguments against it? What were its political and economic advantages? What does kingship have to do with the concept of messianism?

FROM UNITS V AND VI: LOSING THE LAND AND INHABITING THE LAND AGAIN

1. What would a modern day Amos be like (occupation, hometown, peculiar characteristics)? What would his message contain if he were called to announce judgment to your country during a time of prosperity? (Be specific, using direct parallels from Amos--what would be the religious, social, economic, and judicial "sins"?)

2. What were the theological, social, religious, and political challenges of the periods of the exile and restoration? How were these challenges addressed in the preaching and ministries of Jeremiah, Haggai, and Malachi?

FROM UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

1. Relate the different theories of Israel's possession of the land of Canaan to Yahweh's commitment to the responsibility in the land. How do these theories influence the way we live in the land today?

2. How is the biblical tradition of land interpreted in "third world" countries? In the United States? What are some advantages and disadvantages to these interpretations?

FROM UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

1. Discuss the significance of kingship in Israel. Why did some people resist kingship? What are some of the theological arguments against it? What were its political and economic advantages? What does kingship have to do with the concept of monotheism?

FROM UNITS V AND VI: LOSING THE LAND AND REGAINING THE LAND AGAIN

1. What would a modern day Amos be like (personality, background, peculiar characteristics)? What would his message consist of? He was called to announce judgment to your country, during a time of prosperity. (Be specific, using direct parallels from Amos. What would be the religious, social, economic, and judicial sins?)

2. What were the theological, social, religious, and political challenges of the exiles of the eighth century? Compare the theology of the exile to the theology written and in the preaching and writings of Jeremiah, Hosea, and Micah?

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

A course prepared

for Samaritan

by

Dr. Mona West

GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTORS
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This is a three hour course, which means there must be 36 classroom contact hours. Because these 36 hours can be divided in a variety of ways (eg. 4 consecutive Saturdays of 9 hrs each, an intensive four or five day week, etc.), instructors are encouraged to use their discretion, personal teaching style and interests to determine the best way to use the outline and suggestions below.

It is up to instructors to develop their own day-to-day syllabus incorporating the material in this manual.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The Course Outline for part 1 presents the Old Testament in six broad units: (1) general introduction and background; (2) creation of the world and creation of Israel; (3) Israel in the land of Canaan; (4) becoming a great nation in the land; (5) losing the land; (6) inhabiting the land again.

Reading assignments for students:

Each section of the outline has coordinated readings from The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, and the New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. Instructors should assign readings that would best suit their "lesson plans" for each class session.

One of the objectives of this course is to make students better readers of the biblical text. To that end, instructors will find a series of "reading questions" on selected biblical texts in an appendix to this manual. These reading questions are assigned throughout the course outline and provide an inductive approach to teaching and learning.

Suggestions for faculty:

For each unit there is a list of suggested content that faculty should cover in their class presentations. These suggestions offer a range of possibilities. It is assumed that instructors will be selective in their use of these lists, given their own interests, academic training, and background.

Homework assignments/exercises:

For each unit there is also a list of suggested assignments/exercises for students. These may be done in class, or as homework. Once again, instructors are given the flexibility to pick and choose (or create their own) exercises that augment what is being done in class.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Parallel resources:

It might be helpful for the instructor to consult a standard introduction to the Old Testament when preparing for class presentations. Some good introductory texts are:

People of the Covenant, by Jack Flanders, Robert Crapps, and David Smith, Oxford University Press.

The Old Testament Story, by John Tullock, Prentice-Hall Press.

Understanding the Old Testament, by Bernhard Anderson, Prentice-Hall Press.

Reading the Old Testament, by Lawrence Boadt, Paulist Press.

Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective, by Alice Laffey, Fortress Press.

Exploring the Old Testament, by John and Denise Carmody, Prentice-Hall Press.

Grading:

A letter grade of A, B, C, or F must be assigned to each student at the end of the course. Samaritan College uses the following grading scale:

A = 100-90
B = 89-80
C = 79-70
F = 69 and below

It is up to the instructor to devise a grading system that will incorporate some of the exercises/assignments found in this manual into the overall course grade for the student.

It is also up to the instructor to develop any exams (unit tests and/or final) that will assess the students' factual and conceptual knowledge of the course material.

Any of the assignments/exercises listed in this manual may be expanded or weighted in such a way that they can be used as essay questions on unit exams or entire course projects.

The instructor has 30 days from the last class day to report student grades to Samaritan College (contact the Samaritan College Registrar for the official grade report form).

Any grades of "I" (incomplete) or "W" (withdraw) must be explained in writing to the Academic Dean of Samaritan College.

Appendix:

In the appendix to this manual the instructor will find:

1. a listing of "tools for biblical study";

2. a presentation by Dr. Mona West entitled, "The Song of Songs as Scripture for UFMCC";

3. reading questions on selected biblical passages;

4. guidelines and topics for critical essays (if the instructor wishes to require them for the course).

MAP STUDY-INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

MAP #1

1. Jordan River
2. Sea of Galilee
3. Dead Sea
4. Mediterranean Sea
5. Samaria
6. Judah
7. Israel (ancient)
8. Galilee
9. Jerusalem
10. Sodom and Gomorrah

MAP #2

1. Tigris River
2. Euphrates River
3. Sinai peninsula
4. Egypt
5. Nile River
6. Red Sea
7. Libyan desert
8. Arabian desert
9. Jericho
10. Babylonia
11. Assyria
12. Hittite Empire
13. Cyprus
14. Mediterranean Sea
15. Persian Gulf
16. Israel
17. Judah
18. Phoenicia
19. Syria
20. Babylon (city)
21. Ninevah
22. Damascus
23. Memphis
24. Lesbos
25. Byzantium

SYLLABUS FOR
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to the Old Testament of the Christian Bible and provides the student with a working knowledge of biblical history and culture. Areas of study include: biblical history and culture; the growth and transmission of the biblical text; the different types of literature found in the Old Testament and ways to read that literature; critical issues of biblical interpretation. Attention is also given to ideas and themes which emerge from a study of the Old Testament and ways in which these themes can be applied to contemporary experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the growth and transmission of the Old Testament text.
2. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the structure of the literature of the Old Testament by identifying the types of literature represented and different approaches to the reading of this literature.
3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of important theological concepts and themes which emerge from a study of the Old Testament. The student will be encouraged to relate these concepts and themes to human experience.
4. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the geography and culture of the biblical world, as well as knowledge of the main periods and events in biblical history and their relationships to each other.
5. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the critical issues surrounding the interpretation of biblical texts by marginalized groups.

METHODS BY WHICH LEARNING OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACHIEVED

Students will accomplish the above objectives by:

1. reading assignments made in the biblical text, The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, and articles from selected sources;
2. writing critical essays in which the student will evaluate and synthesize assigned readings;

3. taking exams which measure the student's factual knowledge of the course content as well as the student's ability to synthesize this material into a larger whole;
4. answering reading questions on selected biblical texts;
5. small group work.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford University Press

The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mercer University Press

OTHER SOURCES FOR PARALLEL READING:

Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation, Cain Hope Felder, ed., Fortress Press.

Feminist Interpretation of the Bible, Letty Russell, ed., Westminster Press.

The Woman's Bible Commentary, Carol Newsome, ed., Westminster/John Knox Press.

Gay and Lesbian Liberation: A Biblical Perspective, by George R. Edwards, The Pilgrim Press.

Troubling Biblical Waters, by Cain Hope Felder, Orbis Press.

Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World, R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed, Orbis Press.

The Poor of the Land: A Christian Case for Land Reform, by Roy H. May Jr., Orbis Press.

CONTENT SUMMARY, PART I

After introductory and background matters, the outline of the course will roughly follow the plot of the biblical narrative as it is found in the Old Testament books Genesis through 2 Kings. At appropriate intervals, attention will be given to the prophetic tradition in Israel, as well as the wisdom and poetical works of the Old Testament.

There will be 6 broad units to the course:

1. Introduction and background material
2. Creation of the world and creation of Israel as a people (Genesis-Numbers)
3. Israel's early years in the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy-Ruth)
4. Becoming a great nation in the land of Canaan (1 Samuel-1 Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
5. Losing the land (1 Kings-2 Kings, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah)
6. Inhabiting the land again (Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi)

CONTENT OUTLINE
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

I. General Introduction and Background

- A. What is the Old Testament?
- B. How did we get it?
- C. Why study it?
- D. The geography and archeology of the Old Testament world

II. Creation of the World and Creation of Israel

- A. Stories of creation and uncreation
  - 1. Genesis 1 and 2
  - 2. Genesis 3 through 11
- B. The ancestors
  - 1. Promise as a literary theological device
  - 2. The socio-cultural background of the ancestors
- C. Slavery, Liberation, and Covenant
  - 1. Israel in Egypt
  - 2. Africa and Israel's beginnings

3. Revelation of the divine name

4. Moses, the plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea

5. Covenant, law, and cult in the Old Testament

6. The holiness code

7. Wilderness and the paradox of freedom

III. Israel in the Land of Canaan

A. Land in the biblical tradition

B. Conquest and settlement

C. Learning to live in the land

IV. Becoming a Great Nation in the Land

A. Samuel and Saul: the beginnings of the monarchy

B. King David and his house

C. Solomon and the split of the united monarchy

D. Israel's wisdom traditions

E. Israel's poetic traditions

V. Losing the Land

A. The role of the prophet in Israel

B. Classical prophecy

1. Amos and the North

2. Isaiah and the South

C. Jeremiah, the exile, and the new covenant

VI. Inhabiting the Land Again

A. Return and restoration

B. Prophets of the restoration

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(MDB=Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, NOAB=New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha)

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. What is the Old Testament?
MDB: "Old Testament"
NOAB: xxxi-xxxiii OT, "Introduction to the Old Testament"

B. How Did We Get It?
MDB: "Form/Gattung"; "Sources, Literary"; "Tradition in the Old Testament"; "Canon"; "Apocryphal Literature"
NOAB: xxi-xxii, "The Numbers and Sequence of the Books of the Bible"
NOAB: iii-xii AP, "Introduction to the Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical Books"; 179-182 AP "The Book of Susanna"

C. Why Study It?
MDB: "Bible in America"; "Bible in Western Literature"; "Literature, Bible as"; "Bible, Authority of"
NOAB: 400-406 "English Versions of the Bible"

D. The Geography and Archeology of the Old Testament World
MDB: "Fertile Crescent"; "Mesopotamia"; (see also, plate 2 map in the middle section of MDB); "Palestine, Geography of"; "Archaeology"
NOAB: 407-410 "Survey of the Geography, History, and Archaeology of the Bible Lands"

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

A. Stories of Creation and Uncreation

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-2:25
Answer reading questions

MDB: "Genesis, Book of"; "Creation"; "Cosmology"; "Sources of the Pentateuch"

I. COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

NIV Study Bible: Dickerson, et al. (eds.), NIV Study Bible (New American Bible with the Apocrypha)

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. What is the Old Testament?

READ: "Old Testament"

DVD: Introduction to the Old Testament"

B. How Did We Get It?

READ: "Formation", "Canon", "Text", "Translation in the Old Testament", "Canon", "Apocrypha", "The Authority and Canonicity of the Bible", "Critical Apparatus", "The Bible in Its Ancient and Modern Contexts"

DVD: "The Bible"

C. Why Study It?

READ: "Guide to Apocalyptic", "Guide to Wisdom Literature", "Literature, Bible as", "Textual Criticism"

DVD: "Wisdom of the Sages"

D. The Geography and Chronology of the Old Testament

READ: "Archaeology", "Ancient Near Eastern Chronology", "Place in the Hebrew Bible", "Archaeology", "Biblical Geography", "Chronology", "Archaeology", "Survey of the Geography of the Holy Land"

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

A. Genesis of Creation and Universe

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 and 2:4b-2:25
   Answer reading questions

READ: "Genesis, Book of", "Creation", "Cosmology", "Sciences of the Ancient Near East"

2. Read Genesis 3-11
MDB: "Genealogy in the Old Testament"; "Generation"; "Fall"; "Serpent"; "Satan in the Old Testament"; "Cain and Abel"; "Flood"; "Babel, Tower of"

B. The Ancestors

1. Promise as a Literary-Theological Device
Read Genesis 12-23

MDB: "Ancestor"; "Patriarch"; "Promise"; "Abraham"; "Sarah"; "Hagar"; "Ishmael"; "Isaac"

2. Socio-cultural Background of the Ancestors
Read Genesis 24-36 and answer reading questions

MDB: "Family"; "Marriage in the Old Testament"; "Inheritance in the Old Testament"; "Women in the Old Testament"

C. Slavery, Liberation, and Covenant

1. Israel in Egypt
Read Genesis 37-50 and Exodus 1-2

MDB: "Joseph"; "Egypt"; "Exodus, Book of"

2. Africa and Israel's Beginnings
MDB: "Blacks in the Old Testament"; "Ethiopia"; "Nubia"; "Bible and Liberation Movements"

3. The Revelation of the Divine Name
Read Exodus 3

MDB: "Theophany"; "God Language, Inclusive";"God"; "God, Names for"; "Tetragrammaton";

4. Moses, the Plagues, and the Crossing of the Red Sea
Read Exodus 4-15

MDB: "Moses"; "Plagues"; "Red Sea/Reed Sea"; "Exodus"; "Miracles"

5. Covenant, Law, and Cult in the Old Testament
Read Exodus 19-25

2. Read Genesis 3-11
Title: Genealogy in the Old Testament; "Generation"; "Fall"; "Judgment"; "Origin in the Old Testament"; "Cain and Able"; "Flood"; "Noah"; Tower of"

B. The Ancestors

1. Read as a Literary-Theological Device
Read Genesis 18-12-23

Motif: "Ancestors"; "Patriarch"; "Promise"; "Migration"; "Sarah"; "Hagar"; "Isaac"; "Abraham"

2. Make Online Background of the Ancestors
Read Genesis 24-26 and answer reading questions

Motif: "Family"; "Marriage in the Old Testament"; "Alliance in the Old Testament"; "Marriage in the Old Testament"

C. Slavery, Liberation, and Covenant

1. Israel in Egypt
Read Ex. 1-2; 37-50 and Exodus 1-2

Motif: "Land"; "Egypt"; "Exodus, Book of"

2. Moses and Israel's Beginnings
Motif: "Tile" in the Old Testament"; "Slavery"; "Multi"; "Bible and Liberation Movements"

3. The Revelation of the Divine Name
Read Exodus 3

Motif: "Theophany"; "God language, Inclusive"; "God"; "Holy"; "Tetragrammaton"

4. Moses, the Plagues, and the Crossing of the Red Sea
Read Exodus 4-15

Motif: "Moses"; "Plagues"; "Red Sea/Read Sea"; "Exodus"; "Miracles"

5. Covenant, Law, and Cult in the Old Testament
Read Exodus 19-25

MDB: "Covenant"; "Law in the Old Testament"; "Ten Commandments"; "Monotheism"; "Feasts and Festivals"; "Tabernacle"; ""Ark"; "Priests"; "Levi/Levites"

6. The Holiness Code
Read Leviticus 17-26

MDB: "Leviticus, book of;" "clean,unclean;" "holiness in the Old Testament;" "Homosexuality and the Bible"

7. Wilderness and the Paradox of Freedom
Read Exodus 16-17; Numbers 10-12 and 16

MDB: "Desert"; "Numbers, Book of"; "manna"
NOAB: xxxv-xxxvi OT "The Pentateuch"; 267-270 OT "The Historical Books"

UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

A. Land in the Biblical Tradition
Read Deuteronomy chapters 7-11 and 1 Kings 21

MDB: "Land"

B. Conquest and Settlement
Read Numbers 13-14; Joshua 1-8; Judges 1:1-2:5

MDB: "Conquest of Canaan"; "Canaan"; "Canaan, Inhabitants of"; "Land"
NOAB: 411-412 "The Israelite Settlement"

C. Learning to Live in the Land

1. The book of Judges
Read Judges 2:6-21:25

MDB: "Judges, Book of"; "Tribes"; "Amphictyony/Confederacy"; "Baal"; "Religions of the Ancient Near East: Canaanite Religion"

2. The book of Ruth
Read the book of Ruth and answer reading questions

MDB: "Ruth, Book of"

UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

A. Samuel and Saul: The Beginnings of the Monarchy
Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 1:1-13:15
Answer reading questions

MDB: "Samuel, book of First and Second"; "Hannah"; "Samuel"; "Saul"; "Philistines"; "Ark"; "Kingship"
NOAB: 412-413 "The United Monarchy"

B. King David and His House
Read 1 Samuel 17-20 and 2 Samuel 1-18
Answer Reading Questions

MDB: "David"; "Succession Narrative"; "Bathsheba"; "Nathan"; "Jonathan"

C. Solomon and the Split of the United Monarchy
Read 1 Kings 3-12

MDB: "Solomon"; "Jeroboam I"; "Rehoboam"; "United Monarchy"

D. Israel's Wisdom Traditions
Read Proverbs 1-9 and Ecclesiastes 3
Answer reading questions on Proverbs 1-9

MDB: "Proverbs, Book of"; "Proverb"; "Ecclesiastes, Book of"; "Wisdom in the Old Testament"; "Wisdom Literature"

E. Israel's Poetic Traditions
Read Exodus 15:1-18; Psalm 22; Psalm 34, Song of Solomon

MDB: "poetry;" "Psalms, book of"; "Song of Songs"
NOAB" "Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry," pp.392-397

UNIT V: LOSING THE LAND

A. The Role of the Prophet in Israel
Read Deuteronomy 16:18--18:22
Answer introductory questions on prophecy

MDB: "Prophet"; "Prophetess"; "Prophecy"
NOAB: 862-865 OT "The Prophetical Books"

B. Classical Prophecy

1. Amos and the North
Read the book of Amos and answer reading questions

MDB: "Amos"; "Amos, Book of"; "Israel"; "Uzziah"; "Jeroboam II"; "Assyria"

2. Isaiah and the South
Read Isaiah chapters 1-12 and 2 Kings chapters 16-18
Reading questions

MDB: "Isaiah"; "Isaiah, Book of"; "Ahaz"; "Immanuel"; "Messianism"; "Holiness in the Old Testament"

C. Jeremiah, the Exile, and the New Covenant
Read Jeremiah chapters 1-7, 20-22, 29-31

MDB: "Jeremiah"; "Jeremiah, Book of"; "Jehoiakim"; "Josiah"; "Judah, Kingdom of"; "Exile"; "Covenant"; "Babylon"

UNIT VI: INHABITING THE LAND AGAIN

A. Return and Restoration
Read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah

MDB: "Cyrus"; "Persia"; "Ezra"; "Ezra, book of"; "Nehemiah"; "Nehemiah, book of"

B: Prophets of the Restoration
Read the books of Haggai and Malachi

MDB: "Haggai"; "Haggai, book of"; "Malachi"; "Malachi, book of"

UNIT I: SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY

What is the Old Testament?

1. A tangible description of the Old Testament which would include information such as: a collection of 39 books, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, contains different types of literature, etc.

How Did We Get It?

1. Explain the process by which the Old Testament came into existence--oral history, small written units collected into larger literary sources, editors editing those sources into larger "books."

2. Explain the process of the canonization of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible). Mention the "apocryphal" books that did not make it into the Old Testament. Look at the differences between Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Hebrew canons. Make some sort of handout on the canon that lists side by side the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Hebrew canons.

Why Study It?

1. Discuss the impact of the Bible upon Western culture, including art, literature, music, etc.

2. Using the NOAB article on "English Translations of the Bible," lecture on the history of the translation of the Bible into English. Emphasize that any translation is someone's interpretation of what the original languages mean.

3. Distribute copies of "Tools for Biblical Interpretation" (located in the appendix of this manual), and discuss the different types of tools (English translations of the Bible, commentaries, concordances, etc.) that are available for the study of the Bible/Old Testament.

4. Emphasize the importance of the Old Testament as literature. Explore the relationship between the impact the Bible has had as literature and as the Word of God.

   [Articles that would be helpful for the instructor are: "The Bible as a Classic and the Bible as Holy Scripture," by Krister Stendahl in The Journal of Biblical Literature, vol. 103, 1984; "Story and Poem: The Old Testament as Literature and as Scripture," by David J.A. Clines in Interpretation, vol. XXXIV, no. 2, April 1980.]

The Geography and Archeology of the Old Testament World

1. This should be a visual and factual presentation of the geography and archeology of the Old Testament world. The instructor will want to work with maps found in the back of the NOAB.

2. Also emphasize the ways in which an understanding of the geography of the ancient near East can make the biblical text "come alive." For example: an interpretation of the imagery of Psalm 23 in light of the rugged nature of the terrain, the scarcity of water, and the places where danger lurked for both sheep and shepherd.

UNIT I: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Divide the class into small groups (or have the whole class) to discuss the apocryphal story of Susanna. Ask the group to decide whether or not they would have included Susanna in the Old Testament. Why? Why not? (See questions on Susanna in the appendix.)

2. Have students read a short biblical passage in at least three different English translations of the Bible, listing the differences and making written comments about whether or not the different wording changes the meaning of the passage.

3. Take a field trip to a local (where available) theological library, or bring copies of your own resources, and demonstrate to students how concordances and commentaries work.

4. Have blank maps of the ancient near East (you can trace a master copy for duplication from one of the maps in the back of the Oxford Annotated Bible). Lead students in an in-class exercise locating different things on the map. (May be graded as a map test.)

UNIT II: SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY

Stories of creation and uncreation

1. Using the reading questions for Genesis 1 and 2, get students to recognize the differences and similarities in these stories of creation.

2. Emphasize the differences in literary style in these two stories of creation and discuss the presence of different "sources" in the Old Testament (source criticism--see MDB article).

3. Explore the relationship of the stories to one another--are they two separate accounts of creation, or does chapter 2 continue chapter 1?

4. Talk about the creation of woman in chapter 2, emphasizing the ways this story has been misinterpreted from a sexist point of view. (Additional resource for the faculty would be Phyllis Trible's book God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, chapter 1.)

   Do a word study of "helpmate" in Genesis 2:18.

5. Explore the creation of man and woman as an example of human community (humanity is not all male, nor all female), instead of an example for procreation or heterosexuality.

6. Explore the ways in which Genesis 3-11 are stories of creation and uncreation. Human rebelliousness "uncreates" or causes God to uncreate, but in each instance God provides a way to "start over."

The Ancestors

1. Connect the call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 with the stories of creation and uncreation. (Note the genealogy at the end of chapter 11--Abraham is a descendant of Noah.) Point out that Genesis 1-11 are stories of the world's beginnings, while Genesis 12-50 are stories of Israel's beginnings (Genesis means "beginnings").

2. Outline the three-part promise God makes to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 (land, descendants, and a special relationship). Show how this promise is repeated to each of the following ancestors: Abraham, Genesis 13, 15, 17; Isaac, Genesis 26:3-4; Jacob, Genesis 28:13-15; Joseph, Genesis 50:24.

3. Explore the ways in which the promise is threatened or endangered, e.g. the barrenness of the matriarchs (especially Sarah), the birth of Ishmael, the sacrifice of Isaac, etc.

4. Read the story of Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21) from the perspective of a woman of color. Explore the ways Hagar and Ishmael "complicate" the promise. What does this say about marginalized people as part of God's plan/promise to the world?

5. Use the stories of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau to present the socio-cultural background of the ancestors, e.g., marriage customs, roles of women, inheritance rights, importance of family and clan. (See reading questions on Genesis 24-36.)

3. Analyze the relationship of the events in one generation—are they two separate accounts of creation, or does Genesis 2 continue Genesis 1?

4. Talk about the relation of women in scripture, including the way this story has been misinterpreted from a male point of view. (And bring resources for the faculty member's library. There's a book God and the Feminine in Scripture, chapter 1.)

On a wild guess at "rationale" in Genesis 2-16.

5. Explore the creation of man and woman as an example of human community (humanity is not all a male, nor all female), instead of an example for procreation or heterosexuality.

6. Expand on the ways in which Genesis 3-11 are stories of creation and incarnation, human rebellious "innocence" or cry for God to intervene, but in assurance God provides a way to "start over."

The Ancestors

7. Develop the call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 with the stories of creation and incarnation. Relate the genealogy and covenant in 17—Abraham's covenant to Noah's. Point out that Genesis 1-11 are prologue to the work in Genesis 12, while Genesis 12-50 are stories of Israel's beginnings (Genesis is more "beginnings").

8. Outline the three great promise God makes to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 (name, descendants, and a special relationship). Show how the promise is repeated in each of the ancestor stories: Abraham, Genesis 15, 18, 17; Isaac, Genesis 26:3-4; Jacob, Genesis 28:13-15; Joseph, Genesis 50:24.

9. Explore the ways in which the promise is transmitted or endangered, e.g., the barrenness of the matriarchs (especially Sarah), the birth of Ishmael, the sacrifice of Isaac, etc.

10. Read the story of Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21) from the perspective of a woman of color. Explore the ways Hagar and Ishmael "contradicts" the promise. What does this say about marginalized people as part of God's providence in the world?

11. Use the stories of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau to present the socio-cultural background of the patriarchs, e.g., marriage customs, roles of women, inheritance rights, importance of family and clan. (See reading guides in Genesis 24-36.)

Slavery, Liberation, Covenant

(Israel in Egypt)

1. Use the Joseph narrative to explain how ancestors wind up in Egypt. Note the references to Joseph at the beginning of the Exodus story as a bridge from promise to Exodus--Abraham's descendants have become so many that the Pharaoh doesn't know what to do with them!

2. Emphasize the role of women in the birth and call of Moses.

(Africa and Israel's Beginnings)

1. Make students aware of Egypt's geographical relationship to Africa (use maps). Using the MDB articles under Africa and Israel's beginnings, emphasize that the Exodus included a racially mixed group of people, and that blacks are an important part of the Old Testament story.

   The instructor may want to refer to Cain Hope Felder's book, Troubling Biblical Waters (see parallel reading list), for additional information.

(The revelation of the divine name)

1. Explore the importance of knowing the divine name "Yahweh." (Exodus, chapter 3). Names were important in the ancient near east. To know one's name was to know something of that person's essence ("Abraham" in Hebrew means "father of many").

   Connect the importance of inclusive language and using a variety of images for God with the multi-leveled meaning of "I am who I am".

(Moses, the plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea)

1. Discuss the concept of "miracle". How do we account for the "natural" explanation of many of the plagues? What still remains miraculous about the plagues today?

2. Present possible Exodus routes (see Map 2 in the Oxford Annotated Bible); explore different theories for a date of the Exodus--who was the pharaoh of the Exodus?

3. Identify the Exodus motif in other parts of the Old Testament, especially in the prophets Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah.

(Covenant, law, and cult in the Old Testament)

1. Define the terms: covenant, law, and cult.

2. Discuss worship in the Old Testament. Include the three yearly pilgrim festivals (passover, weeks, tabernacles) and their association with the Exodus story.

(The holiness code)

1. Present a literary analysis of the book of Leviticus, indicating its relationship to the larger Pentateuch.

2. Present the concepts of clean/unclean and holiness. Deal with the passages in Leviticus 19 and 21 that mention homosexuality from this context.

(Wilderness and the paradox of freedom)

1. Explore the tension between the "security" of slavery in Egypt and the uncertainty of the wilderness. What are some other paradoxes of freedom? In what ways could the wilderness wanderings be considered Israel's "adolescence"?

UNIT II: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss student answers to the reading questions on Genesis 1 and 2 in small groups or the larger class setting (see appendix in this manual for reading questions).

2. Show the Joseph Campbell video, The Power of Myth, (PBS series, should be available from Blockbuster video) and have students discuss it in small groups. You may also have the students write a reaction paper to Campbell's presentation of Genesis 1 as myth.

3. Have students discuss in small groups the significance of marginalized people in God's plan of salvation (promise) for the world. (See faculty suggestions on the Hagar/Ishmael story.)

4. Discuss student answers to the reading questions on Genesis 24-36 in small groups or the larger class setting. (See appendix for questions.)

5. Have students discuss in small groups or write a reflection paper on the significance of Egypt's connection with Africa.

   Slaves in the United States embraced the Exodus as a story of liberation, what new perspectives would be added to this story if the pharaoh were from Africa, i.e., black?

What does this say about the struggle for liberation being more than a black/white issue?

What does this say about lateral or horizontal violence in the gay and lesbian community?

6. Photocopy pages 164-168 from Alice Walker's book, The Color Purple, (this is the passage about God being identified with the color purple). Have students discuss in small groups the connections between this piece and the need for different images/names of God (see also revelation of the divine name).

7. Have students discuss in small groups "the paradox of freedom" with regard to the wilderness wanderings after the exodus. What sort of parallels does this paradoxical nature of freedom have for the gay and lesbian community, e.g. the paradox of coming out?

UNIT III: SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY

Land in the biblical tradition

1. Make students aware of the transition from the Pentateuch to the Historical books, when they begin reading about Israel in the land.

2. Explore the themes of land as promise and gift. Note the tension between the biblical understanding of the land as Yahweh's and the land as Israel's (cf. Deuteronomy 7:1-9).

3. Note the importance of land in the ancient world and attitudes about land today (in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union).

Conquest and settlement

1. Present the different theories on how Israel inhabited the land. (Conquest, settlement, or peasant revolt?)

2. How would Latin American peasants who have had their family land taken from them by North American industry and wealthy developers read the story of the conquest of Canaan? (Roy May's book, The Poor of the Land, would be a helpful resource on this topic--see parallel texts.)

   How would Native Americans in the United States read the story of the conquest of Canaan? (See the article, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" in the parallel text by Sugirtharajah.)

What does this say about the struggle for liberty in being more than a bloodwhite race?

What does this say about liberal or rationalist violence in the gay and lesbian community?

6. Photocopy pages 184-185 from Alice Walker's book, *The Color Purple*, (she's the person who talks about God being the author of a color palette). Have students discuss in small groups the connection between the place and the head for different physical aspects of race (skin tone, elevation of the cranial cavity).

7. Have students discuss in small groups "the paradox of freedom" with regard to the American West, where the "frontier" was a place of freedom and liberty for the gay and lesbian community, e.g., the sexuality of cowboys.

UNIT III: SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY

Land in the biblical tradition

1. Make students aware of the tradition in the Old Testament in the Hebrew Bible, where they learn that God cares about land in the world.

2. Discuss the themes of land as promise and gift. Note the tension between the sacred and secular, the land as God's and the land as human's (cf. Deuteronomy 7:7-9).

3. Make the geographic place in the ancient world and as it relates actual land today (in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union).

Conquest and settlement

1. Present the different theories on how Israel initiated its land. (Conquest, peaceful move, or revolt from the land).

2. How would students feel if their family had been forcibly removed from their land by North American Indians (Indians) and western cowboys? (Students read the story of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua in the book, *The Great Conquest*, would be a helpful resource on this topic, see Bibliography).

How would Native Americans in the United States feel the story of the conquest of Canaan? (Read a book, *A Native American Perspective: Canada's Neglected Cowboys and Indians*, in the personal story of Sam Gladstone).

Learning to live in the land

1. Demonstrate the literary-theological pattern of sin-oppression-repentance-deliverance in the book of Judges.

2. Discuss the violence in the book. How do we understand this violence as the "word of God"?

3. Present the stories about women in the book of Judges. (The Woman's Bible Commentary, would be a helpful resource--see parallel texts.)

4. Explore the book of Ruth as a historical and theological bridge from the period of the judges to the monarchy in Israel. (See especially the beginning of the book and the ending genealogy.)

UNIT III: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Have students discuss in small groups or write a reaction/reflection paper on the violence in the book of Judges.

   How might the literary-theological pattern of sin-oppression-repentance-deliverance and the violent nature of the book shed new understanding on Judges 19--a text that has been used against homosexuality?

2. Assign an essay in which students must interpret the story of the conquest of the land of Canaan from a Canaanite perspective.

3. Have students discuss in small groups or in an essay, the nature of Ruth and Naomi's relationship. Is it a lesbian relationship? In that culture, what did it mean for Ruth to join herself to Naomi in the way that she did?

   Have students explore the ways in which the book of Ruth provides some alternatives to the traditional definition of "family," e.g., surrogate motherhood, marriage of convenience.

4. Discuss in the larger class setting or small groups the reading questions on the book of Ruth. (See appendix for reading questions.)

[illegible]
Learning to live in the land

1. Examine the library for a good balance of anti-oppressive representations in the book of judges.

2. Compare all versions in the book. How do the [illegible] compare to the "good ol' days"?

3. Present the stories about women in the book of Judges. (The Woman's Bible Commentary was a helpful resource here [illegible])

4. Using the book of Ruth as a resource and [illegible] data from the [illegible] discuss how women lived in Israel. (See especially the beginning of the book and the second chapter.)

UNIT III: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Have students [illegible] in small groups or write a reaction/reflection paper on the violence in a book of Judges.

   How [illegible] anti-[illegible] [illegible] on the [illegible] of a [illegible] on Judges 19–21 [illegible] been used [illegible]?

2. Assign an essay in which students must [illegible] the story of the [illegible] of the land of Canaan from a Canaanite perspective.

3. Have students [illegible] in small groups or in an essay, the meaning of Ruth and Naomi's relationship. Is it a lesbian relationship? In what culture, when could it be for Ruth to join herself in marriage in this way [illegible]?

   Have students [illegible] the way in which the book of Ruth [illegible] allusions to [illegible] definition of "family", e.g., surrogate motherhood, marriage of convenience.

4. Discuss the [illegible] of a [illegible] the reading [illegible] of Ruth. (See [illegible] for teaching [illegible].)

UNIT IV: FACULTY SUGGESTIONS

Samuel and Saul: the beginnings of the monarchy

1. Present the story of the birth of Samuel, emphasizing the role of Hannah. Draw parallels between Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2 and Mary's song in Luke 1.

2. Outline the tensions between the literary sources in the book of Samuel that are pro-monarchy and anti-monarchy.

3. Present Samuel as a transitional figure from judges to monarchy.

4. Outline the religious and political changes that occur as a result of Israel's shift from a loose federation of tribes led by charismatic military heroes (judges) to a nation with a king and court.

King David and his house

1. Present the events of David's being crowned king of all Israel, his choice of Jerusalem as the capital of the kingdom, and his moving the ark of the covenant permanently to Jerusalem.

2. Explore the relationship between David and Jonathan. (See especially their encounters in 1 Samuel chapters 18, 19, and 20, and David's comment in 2 Samuel 1:26.)

3. Explore the theological tensions between the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7) and the Mosaic covenant (10 commandments).

4. Note the ways in which Nathan's prophecy in 2 Kings 12 is fulfilled in the stories about David's children that follow.

Solomon and the split of the united monarchy

1. Outline the characteristics of Solomon's reign.

2. Present the people and events that lead up to the split of the united monarchy.

Israel's wisdom traditions

1. Discuss the association of the wisdom traditions with king Solomon.

2. Discuss "Solomonic authorship" of the Song of Solomon. Using the article in the appendix, present the Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) as 'scripture' for UFMCC.

3. Characterize the "wisdom" books of the Old Testament (their themes, distinctive theology, literary forms).

4. Explore the female image of wisdom in Proverbs 1-9. (See reading questions.)

5. Note the "skeptical" slant of some wisdom writings, especially Ecclesiastes.

6. Note the parallels and differences between wisdom in Israel and wisdom in the ancient near eastern world.

Israel's poetic traditions

1. Discuss "Davidic authorship" of the book of Psalms.

2. Present the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, including poetic parallelism.

3. Present the basic form critical types: psalm of lament, psalm of thanksgiving, psalm of praise.

UNIT IV: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Have students discuss reading questions on Samuel and Saul in small groups.

2. Have students discuss reading questions on David in small groups.

3. Have students discuss reading questions on Proverbs 1-9 in small groups.

4. The instructor may want to allow the students to work in groups on the reading questions in 1-3 above as part of their class time.

5. Have students write a reflection paper on the parallels between the kinds of changes that occurred in Israel's shift from "a loose federation of tribes" to a monarchy and the kinds of changes UFMCC has experienced in its shift from "a loose federation of local church groups to a bona fide denomination".

6. Assign students an essay on, "What made David great for ancient Israel? Why do you suppose that early Christians chose to think of Jesus as a "new David"?

7. Have students write a reaction paper to the article, "Song of Songs for UFMCC".

8. Ask students to write their own psalm of lament, psalm of praise, and psalm of thanksgiving using the form particular to each of these psalm types.

3. Characterize the "wisdom" books of the Old Testament (Job, Proverbs, distinctive theology, literary forms).

4. Explore the female image of wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 (see reading questions).

5. Note the "skeptical" slant of some wisdom writings, especially Ecclesiastes.

6. Note the parallels and differences between wisdom in Israel and wisdom in the ancient near eastern world.

Israel's poetic literature

1. Discuss "Davidic authorship" of the book of Psalms.

2. Present the one-sentence of Hebrew poetry, including parallelism.

3. Present the basic forms of lyric poetry: psalms of lament, psalm of thanksgiving, psalm of praise.

UNIT IV: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Have students discuss reading questions on Genesis and Exodus in small groups.

2. Have students discuss reading questions on Deuteronomy in small groups.

3. Have students discuss reading questions on Proverbs 1-9 in small groups.

4. The instructor may wish to allow the students to work in groups on the reading questions in 1-3 above as part of their class time.

5. Have students write a reflection paper on the parallels between the "covenants" they have been exposed to in Israel's ancient world and the "covenant" of Israel's relationship with God. Discuss the kinds of changes (if any) this experience in life shift from "a loose federation of local clans" groups to a "more tight theocracy".

6. Assign students an essay on, "What makes David great for ancient Israel? Why do you suppose that early Christians chose to think of Jesus as a "new David"?

7. Have students write a reaction paper to the article, "Song of Songs: To Whom?".

8. Ask students to write their own poem of lament, poem of praise, and poem of thanksgiving using the form evidence in each of these poetic types.

UNIT V: FACULTY SUGGESTIONS

The role of the prophet in Israel

1. Present different theories about the origin and development of Israelite prophecy set against the background of prophecy in the ancient near east.

2. Make a distinction between pre-classical and classical prophecy, giving characteristics for each.

3. Explore the questions: who were the prophets? what did they preach?

4. Outline the process for the formation of a prophetic book. Note the parallels with canonization and inspiration of scripture.

5. Present the women prophets of the Old Testament.

Classical prophecy: Amos and Isaiah

(Amos)

1. Rehearse the historical situation in Israel (northern kingdom) that provides the occasion for Amos' preaching.

2. Present the ways Amos is a classical prophet, e.g., speech forms, theology, call, book that bears his name.

(Isaiah)

1. Rehearse the historical events in Judah (southern kingdom) that impact the early ministry of Isaiah.

2. Present different theories about the unity and authorship of the 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah.

3. Do an in-class exegesis of the call of Isaiah (chapter 6) and/or the Immanuel passage (chapter 7).

4. Present the distinctive theology of the book of Isaiah.

5. Present the basic themes of the preaching of the classical (8th century) prophets.

UNIT V: FAMILY STUDY SUGGESTIONS

The role of the prophet in Israel

1. Pick a Hebrew prophet (Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi) and describe the social and political conditions in which he lived and prophesied. Compare the two groups of prophecy in the ancient near east.

2. Explain a distinction between pre-classical and classical prophecy, giving characteristics for each.

3. Explore the questions: who were the prophets? What did they preach?

4. Outline the process for the formation of a prophetic book. Note the particular contribution and influence of social (c).

5. Present the western models of the Old Testament.

Universal Theology: Amos and Hosea

(Amos)

1. Summarize the historical situation in Israel (North and Kingdom) that provoked the occasion for Amos' prophecy.

2. Present the ways Amos is a universal prophet, e.g., applied terms, theology, etc. Does that cause his errors.

(Isaiah)

1. Outline the historical events in Judah (South in Kingdom) that moved the same authority of Isaiah.

2. Present authors' observations about the unity and authenticity of the 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah.

3. Do an in-depth analysis of the call of Isaiah (chapter 6) stating the language, passage (Isaiah 7).

4. Present the alternative theology of the book of Isaiah.

5. Present the basic themes of the prophecy of the classical (8th century) prophets.

Jeremiah, the exile, and the new covenant

1. Rehearse the historical events that lead up to the Babylonian exile of 587 B.C.E.

2. Do an in-class exegesis of Jeremiah's call (chapter 1) and/or the temple sermon (chapter 7).

3. Present a "portrait" of Jeremiah, focusing on his confessions and emphasizing the struggle he had with his call.

4. Explore the marital and erotic imagery Jeremiah uses in his prophecies (betrothal, chapter 2; marital failure, chapter 3; spiritual circumcision, chapter 4; infidelity, chapter 5; Jerusalem as a wicked woman, chapter 6; Jeremiah's "bachelorhood," chapter 16; seduction, chapter 20:7. How do women and gay and lesbian people hear these words today?

5. Present major theological changes that took place in Israel as a result of the exile, e.g., questions about Israel's election and Yahweh's power (Yahweh's relationship to other nations), questions about the justice of Yahweh (nature of evil and suffering of the righteous), questions about the presence of Yahweh (no temple, where did Yahweh dwell), development of a future hope of a Messiah and a new age.

6. Present the covenants of the Old Testament: with Noah (Genesis 9); with Moses (Exodus 19-20); with David (2 Samuel 7); with restored Israel (Jeremiah 31). Indicate the distinctiveness of each and the significance of the new covenant passage for Israel's history and the Christian gospel.

UNIT V: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss in small groups student answers to introductory questions on prophecy.

2. Discuss student answers to reading questions on Amos and Isaiah (may be divided over several class periods).

3. Have students do in-class presentations on a certain prophet of the Old Testament. Be sure students include information about the historical background of the prophet and the nature of the prophet's ministry/preaching.

4. Using the new covenant passage in Jeremiah 31, have students write an essay on the concept of grace in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah, the exile, and the covenant

1. Reviews the historical events that lead up to the Babylonian exile of 587 B.C.E.

2. Uses the Jeremiah scenario of John Hunter's call (chapter 1) and/or the temple sermon (chapter 7).

3. Presents a "portrait" of Jeremiah focusing on his confessions and emphasizing the changes in his "life" as well.

4. Explores the material and social landscape of Jeremiah's area in his prophecy: (a) politics, religion, military, trade, commerce; (b) spatial dimensions, e.g., Jerusalem, Anathoth, Egypt; (c) temporal dimensions, e.g., 626 B.C.E., 587 B.C.E., 597 B.C.E., 586 B.C.E., 605 B.C.E., "Jehoiakim's fourth year" (chapter 25). How do we know the day and location of events in Jeremiah's life?

5. Provides models for contemporary challenges that Jeremiah faced at a time of crisis, e.g., war, exile, and Yahweh's anger and Yahweh's power (Yahweh's anger is to other nations), questions about the place of Yahweh (nature of Yahweh and solution of the religious), questions about the presence of Yahweh (to Israelite, where did Yahweh go?), development of a bible (type of a bible and a new age).

6. Presents the "covenants" of the old Testament, with Israel (Genesis 9); with Moses (Exodus 19–20; Leviticus 1–7); with Israel (Jeremiah 31), including the discovery as it relates to the Deuteronomic reform; the new covenant passages in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Deuteronomic period.

UNIT VI: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. Discussion (small groups): student answers to introductory questions on prophecy.

2. Discussion (small groups): interesting investigations on Amos and Isaiah (may be divided over several class sessions).

3. Have students do in-class presentations on a social aspect of the Old Testament. Ensure students are aware of the difference between the social setting and the prophet and the nature of the prophetic oracle/prophecy.

4. Using the new covenant passages in Jeremiah 31, have students write an essay on the concept of place in the Old Testament.

5. Using the call narrative in Jeremiah chapter 1 and the laments of Jeremiah in chapters 11-20, have students write (or share in small groups) an account of their "call" and the struggles they have encountered.

UNIT VI: FACULTY SUGGESTIONS

1. Rehearse the events that led up to the end of the exile and the return of Israel to the land.

2. Present the problems the people had with their return to the land and the restoration of the temple: some had been born in Babylon and did not want to return; the ones who stayed looked down their nose at the ones who returned; the people got discouraged about rebuilding the temple.

3. Present the ministries of Haggai and Malachi within the historical context of return and restoration.

4. Present the roles Ezra and Nehemiah had as religious and political leaders during this time of restoration.

5. Discuss the negative attitude Ezra and Nehemiah had toward foreigners and indicate how this attitude was acted out (foreign wives and children were "put away"). Explore how this attitude is in tension with the broader understanding of Yahweh's `election' of Israel and Yahweh's relationship with other nations that results from the exile.

UNIT VI: STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

1. From the perspective of a child or wife who had been put aside as foreign, have students write an essay against this particular `reform' of Ezra and Nehemiah.

2. Using the questions the Israelites ask in the book of Malachi, have students give a presentation on the particular challenges facing UFMCC as a denomination. What would be some words and acts of encouragement a modern day Malachi might give to UFMCC?

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I
SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

General guidelines:

The following are some general guidelines for faculty who will be working with students enrolled in the correspondence course, Understanding the Bible, Part I. Enclosed, please find the syllabus that will be mailed to students along with their verification of enrollment form.

The structure of this course and the nature of the assignments challenge the student to be a careful reader and a good writer. Obviously, faculty members for this course will need to read the same material assigned to the student so they can make informed decisions about the quality of the student's work. It will be important for you, the faculty member, to be in contact with the student early in the course to make sure that the student understands the reading and what you will be looking for when you grade assignments.

There are 20 assignments the student must complete for this course. Thirteen of them are "objective" in nature. That is, they ask the student to identify terms, list characteristics, answer study questions. Together, these assigments are worth 50% of course grade. The remaining seven assignments are short papers in which students are asked to write responses to particular questions or respond to a statement or reading. Three of these papers are 3-5 pages in length and each are worth 10% of the course grade. The remaining four papers are 2-3 pages in length and each are worth 5% of the course grade.

Some general instructions have been given to the student about how to answer the essay questions. It will be up to you, the faculty, to determine whether or not the student has understood the question and answered it appropriately. Grading essay assignments is a subjective enterprise. Faculty are encouraged to give students clear feedback concerning their answers, and to do this in a timely manner so that students can answer remaining assignments more thoroughly. Faculty are also encouraged to allow students to resubmit an assignment if they did not understand it and answered it incorrectly. (Faculty are not obligated to do this for every assignment, but an effort should be made to give the student adequate opportunity to accomplish such a subjective task.)

As a general rule of thumb faculty should keep the following in mind as they grade student papers/essays:

1. Look for specific interaction with the readings. Faculty should be able to tell from students' answers that they read the material.
2. Make sure students don't just copy large blocks of material from the textbooks as their "answer." The assignments challenge students to synthesize reading in several sources and formulate "answers" in their own words.

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I
SAMARIAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

General guidelines:

The following are some general guidelines for faculty who will be working with students enrolled in the correspondence course, Understanding the Bible, Part I. Enclosed, please find the syllabus that will be mailed to students along with their verification of enrollment form.

The structure of this course and the nature of the assignments allowing the student to be a careful reader and a good writer. Obviously, faculty members, for this course, will need to read the same material assigned to the students so they can make informed decisions about the quality of the student's work. It will be important, for you, the faculty member, to be in contact with the student early in the course to make sure that the student understands the reading and what you will be looking for when you grade assignments.

There are 20 assignments the student must complete for this course. Thirteen of them are "objective" in nature. That is, they are fill-in-the-blank, true-false, multiple-choice, answer-study questions. Together, these assignments are worth 50% of course grade. The remaining seven assignments are short papers in which students are asked to write responses to particular questions or respond to a statement or reading. Three of these papers are 3-5 pages in length and each are worth 10% of the course grade. The remaining four papers are 1-3 pages in length and each are worth 5% of the course grade.

Some general instructions have been given to the student about how to answer the essay questions. It will be up to you, the faculty, to determine whether or not the student has understood the question and answered it appropriately. Grading essay assignments is a subjective endeavor. Faculty are encouraged to give students credit for showing evidence of their answers, and to do this in a fair, consistent manner so that students can answer remaining assignments more thoroughly. Faculty are also encouraged to allow students to resubmit an assignment if they did not understand it and answered it incorrectly. (Faculty are not obligated to do this for every assignment. But an option should be made to give students adequate opportunity to accomplish such a subjective task.)

As a general rule of thumb faculty should keep the following in mind as they grade student papers/essays:

1. Look for specific interaction with the reading. Faculty should be able to tell from students' answers that they read the material.
2. Make sure students didn't just copy large blocks of material from the textbook as their "answer." This assignment is attempting to identify students' understanding in their own words and formulate "answers" in their own words.

3. In some cases students are asked to cite specific information from their reading. Make sure that this information is included in the students' paper when the assignment specifies such.
4. Develop your own approach to grading these assignments. You may want to determine specific elements that must be included as a minimum for an answer. These could be assigned a numerical value and points added or deducted based on the student's response.

   Another approach might involve reading the essay in its entirety and deciding whether the answer is "A" quality, "B" quality, etc. Of course, you would want to have in mind what an "A" answer would include before you begin reading the student's paper.

   (See the Faculty Handbook for Samaritan's grading scale.)

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT:

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Assignment #1: 3-5 page essay (10%)

The student's paper should contain factual information from the reading in NOAB and MDB. Things like: a collection of 39 writings; many different types of literature (law, poetry, narrative, history, etc.); written in Hebrew and Aramaic over a period of 1000 years; tells the story of God's dealings with Israel; for Christians the Old Testament has a distinct relationship to the New Testament--both are read together as the story of God's salvation for the world; influenced Western culture in the areas of art, literature, music and law.

Assignment #2: study questions on geography and archeology

These questions are designed to guide the student through the articles in the MDB. Look for complete answers and direct interaction with the reading.

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

Assignment #3: reading questions on Genesis 1 and 2

Reading questions on the biblical text are designed to guide the student in close reading of a particular biblical passage. Often the questions prompt students to think about critical issues with regard to biblical interpretation (such as the literary and theological differences between the Yahwist's account of creation and the Priestly account of creation.)

Faculty should look for interaction with the biblical text and complete answers to the questions.

3. In some cases students are asked to cite specific information from their reading. Make sure that this information is included in the students' paper when the assignment specifies such.
4. Develop your own approach to grading these assignments. You may want to determine specific elements that must be included as a minimum for an answer. These could be assigned a numerical value and total is added or deducted based on the student's response.

Another approach might involve reading the essay in its entirety and deciding whether the answer is "A" quality, "B" quality, etc. Of course, you would want to have in mind what an "A" answer would include before you begin reading the student's paper.

(See the Faculty Handbook for Samaritan's grading scale.)

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT:

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Assignment #1: 3-5 page essay (20%)

The student's paper should contain basical factual information from the reading in MOAS and MOB. Things like: a collection of 66 writings; many different types of literature (law, poetry, narrative, history, etc.), written in Hebrew and Aramaic over a period of 1000 years; is the story of God's dealings with Israel, for Christians the Old Testament has a distinct relationship to the New Testament--don't are treat topically as the story of God's salvation for the world; influences Western culture in the areas of art, literature, music and law.

Assignment #2: study questions on Genesis and creation

These questions are designed to guide the student through the articles in the MOB. Look for complete answers and direct interaction with the reading.

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

Assignment #3: study questions on Genesis 3 and 7

Reading questions on the biblical text are designed to guide the student in close reading of a particular biblical passage. Often the questions prompt students to think about critical issues with regards to biblical interpretation (such as the literary and theological differences between the Yahwist's account of creation and the Priestly account of creation.)

Faculty should look for interaction with the biblical text and complete answers to the questions.

Assignment #4: exercise on Genesis 3-11
Application of this pattern would look like this: (Genesis 3) temptatation = challenge by the serpent to disobey God, sin = actual eating of the forbidden fruit, discovery of sin by God = God walking in the garden and asking what the man and woman had done, judgment = actual pronouncement of judgment "because you have done this. . .", punishment = driving man and woman out of the garden, mercy = God makes them clothing before they are driven out.

(Genesis 4) temptation = Cain's jealousy of his brother, sin = Cain kills Abel, discovery = God says "the blood of your brother cries out from the ground, judgment = pronouncement of curse, "because you have done this. . .", punishment = driving out, Cain becomes a fugative, mercy = Cain's mark.

The pattern breaks down after the Cain and Abel story. Only certain parts can be found in the story of the Flood, and the Tower of Babel.

The point of the exercise is to make students aware of the central themes of crime, punishment and mercy in these stories.

Assignment #5: reading questions on the ancestors
(see above comments on Genesis 1 and 2)

Assignment #6: 2-3 page reflection paper (5% of course grade)
Note the specific questions students are to respond to in this assignment. Grade according to their sincere attempt to deal with the issue of Africa and Israel's beginnings.

Assingment #7: 2-3 page reflection paper (5% of course grade)
Student papers should reflect reading in the Mercer Dictionary and Exodus 3. The fact that YHWH can be translated a number of ways and that it means "I am who I am" indicates that God cannot be contained in a box or a single image or language system. Inclusive language emphasizes that there are many ways of referring to God. When we say there is only one way, we border on idolatry.

Assignment #8: study questions on Moses, plagues, exodus, and law
(see guidelines on study questions on Assignment #2 above)

Assignment #9: 2-3 page reflection paper (5% of course grade)
Students should use the readings on the wanderings in the wilderness to reflect on the "paradox of freedom." Parallels should be drawn with the gay and lesbian community as well as UFMCC.

UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

Assignment #10: study questions on the conquest
(See guidelines for Assignment #2.)

Assignment #11: reading questions on Judges and Ruth
(See guidelines for reading questions on biblical passages under Assignment #3.)

UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

Assignment #12: reading questions on Samuel
(See guidelines under Assignment #3.)

Assignment #13: reading questions on David
(See Assignment #3.)

Asssignment #14: reading questions on Proverbs
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #15: 2-3 page reflection paper (5%)
Look for genuine interaction with the article on Song of Songs by Dr. Mona West.

UNIT V: LOSING THE LAND

Assignment #16: questions on prophecy
These are open ended questions about the nature of prophecy which are designed to get the student to begin thinking about the subject.

Assignment #17: reading questions on Amos
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #18: reading questions on Isaiah
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #19: 3-5 page paper (character sketch of Jeremiah) (10%)
The guidelines for this assignment in the appendix of the student syllabus. Make sure students address each part of the assignment. Student answers should reflect reading in the assigned passages of the biblical text.

UNIT VI: INHABITING THE LAND AGAIN

Assignment #20: 3-5 page paper (10% of course grade)
Student paper should reflect specific information from MDB and interaction with the biblical text. (Faculty should be able to tell that students read the material in the Bible.)

Assignment #11: reading questions on Judges and Ruth
(See guidelines for reading questions on biblical passages under Assignment #3.)

UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

Assignment #12: reading questions on Samuel
(See guidelines under Assignment #3.)

Assignment #13: reading questions on David
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #14: reading questions on Prophecies
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #15: 2-3 page reflection paper (10%)
Look for genuine interaction with the article on Song of Songs by Dr. Mona West.

UNIT V: LOSING THE LAND

Assignment #16: questions on prophecy
These are open ended questions about the nature of prophecy which are designed to get the students to begin thinking about the subject.

Assignment #17: reading questions on Amos
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #18: reading questions on Isaiah
(See Assignment #3.)

Assignment #19: 3-5 page paper (character sketch of Jeremiah) (10%)
The guidelines for this assignment in the appendix of the student's guidebook. Make sure students adhere as much as possible to the guidelines of the assignment. Student answers should reflect reading in the assigned passages of the biblical text.

UNIT VI: HAGGITING THE LAND AGAIN

Assignment #20: 3-5 page paper (10% of course grade)
Student paper should reflect specific information from MOB and interaction with the biblical text. (Faculty should be able to tell that students read the material in the Bible.)

SYLLABUS FOR
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to the Old Testament of the Christian Bible and provides the student with a working knowledge of biblical history and culture. Areas of study include: biblical history and culture; the growth and transmission of the biblical text; the different types of literature found in the Old Testament and ways to read that literature; critical issues of biblical interpretation. Attention is also given to ideas and themes which emerge from a study of the Old Testament and ways in which these themes can be applied to contemporary experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the growth and transmission of the Old Testament text.
2. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the structure of the literature of the Old Testament by identifying the types of literature represented and different approaches to the reading of this literature.
3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of important theological concepts and themes which emerge from a study of the Old Testament. The student will be encouraged to relate these concepts and themes to human experience.
4. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the geography and culture of the biblical world, as well as knowledge of the main periods and events in biblical history and their relationships to each other.
5. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the critical issues surrounding the interpretation of biblical texts by marginalized groups.

METHODS BY WHICH LEARNING OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACHIEVED

Students will accomplish the above objectives by:

1. reading assignments made in the biblical text, The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, and articles from selected sources;
2. writing critical essays in which the student will evaluate and synthesize assigned readings;

3. taking exams which measure the student's factual knowledge of the course content as well as the student's ability to synthesize this material into a larger whole;
4. answering reading questions on selected biblical texts;
5. small group work.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford University Press

The Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mercer University Press

OTHER SOURCES FOR PARALLEL READING:

Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation, Cain Hope Felder, ed., Fortress Press.

Feminist Interpretation of the Bible, Letty Russell, ed., Westminster Press.

The Woman's Bible Commentary, Carol Newsome, ed., Westminster/John Knox Press.

Gay and Lesbian Liberation: A Biblical Perspective, by George R. Edwards, The Pilgrim Press.

Troubling Biblical Waters, by Cain Hope Felder, Orbis Press.

Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World, R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed, Orbis Press.

The Poor of the Land: A Christian Case for Land Reform, by Roy H. May Jr., Orbis Press.

CONTENT SUMMARY, PART I

After introductory and background matters, the outline of the course will roughly follow the plot of the biblical narrative as it is found in the Old Testament books Genesis through 2 Kings. At appropriate intervals, attention will be given to the prophetic tradition in Israel, as well as the wisdom and poetical works of the Old Testament.

3. taking a series of short breaks in the student's flow of work, perhaps at the course conclusion as well as the course commencement, to ponder aloud, to reflect on the material and to integrate it into a larger whole;
4. appropriately posing questions on selected critical texts;
5. small group work.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

The Iliad (Lattimore Translation). Edition of choice. Oxford University Press.

The Odyssey (Lattimore Translation). Edition of choice. Harper Collins Publishers.

OTHER SOURCES FOR READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Frederick Ahl and Hershel Roskin, Aesop's Fables (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Bernard Knox, Oldest Dead White Europeans (Norton, 1993).

The Homeric Hymns (Penguin Classics, 1995).

Hesiod, Theogony, Works and Days, Shield (Oxford World's Classics, 1988).

Virgil, The Aeneid (Penguin Classics, 1990).

The Poetry of Sappho (Oxford University Press, 1990).

COURSE SUMMARY, PART I

Although brevity and focus are the watchwords, the reading of the course will cover the gamut of the literature, as it stands today in the Old Testament, Greek and Roman worlds. An overall conclusion, as we shall see, is that the Greeks to be good, the Romans to be great, and the Hebrews to be holy were needed to prepare the Old Testament.

There will be 6 broad units to the course:

1. Introduction and background material
2. Creation of the world and creation of Israel as a people (Genesis-Numbers)
3. Israel's early years in the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy-Ruth)
4. Becoming a great nation in the land of Canaan (1 Samuel-1 Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
5. Losing the land (1 Kings-2 Kings, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah)
6. Inhabiting the land again (Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi)

CONTENT OUTLINE
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, PART I

I. General Introduction and Background

- A. What is the Old Testament?
- B. How did we get it?
- C. Why study it?
- D. The geography and archeology of the Old Testament world

II. Creation of the World and Creation of Israel

- A. Stories of creation and uncreation
  - 1. Genesis 1 and 2
  - 2. Genesis 3 through 11
- B. The ancestors
  - 1. Promise as a literary theological device
  - 2. The socio-cultural background of the ancestors
- C. Slavery, Liberation, and Covenant
  - 1. Israel in Egypt
  - 2. Africa and Israel's beginnings

3. Revelation of the divine name

4. Moses, the plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea

5. Covenant, law, and cult in the Old Testament

6. The holiness code

7. Wilderness and the paradox of freedom

III. Israel in the Land of Canaan

A. Land in the biblical tradition

B. Conquest and settlement

C. Learning to live in the land

IV. Becoming a Great Nation in the Land

A. Samuel and Saul: the beginnings of the monarchy

B. King David and his house

C. Solomon and the split of the united monarchy

D. Israel's wisdom traditions

E. Israel's poetic traditions

V. Losing the Land

A. The role of the prophet in Israel

B. Classical prophecy

1. Amos and the North

2. Isaiah and the South

C. Jeremiah, the exile, and the new covenant

VI. Inhabiting the Land Again

A. Return and restoration

B. Prophets of the restoration

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(MDB=Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, NOAB=New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha)

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. What is the Old Testament?
MDB: "Old Testament"
NOAB: xxxi-xxxiii OT, "Introduction to the Old Testament"

B. How Did We Get It?
MDB: "Form/Gattung"; "Sources, Literary"; "Tradition in the Old Testament"; "Canon"; "Apocryphal Literature"
NOAB: xxi-xxii, "The Numbers and Sequence of the Books of the Bible"
NOAB: iii-xii AP, "Introduction to the Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical Books"; 179-182 AP "The Book of Susanna"

C. Why Study It?
MDB: "Bible in America"; "Bible in Western Literature"; "Literature, Bible as"; "Bible, Authority of"
NOAB: 400-406 "English Versions of the Bible"

D. The Geography and Archeology of the Old Testament World
MDB: "Fertile Crescent"; "Mesopotamia"; (see also, plate 2 map in the middle section of MDB); "Palestine, Geography of"; "Archaeology"
NOAB: 407-410 "Survey of the Geography, History, and Archaeology of the Bible Lands"

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

A. Stories of Creation and Uncreation

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-2:25
Answer reading questions

MDB: "Genesis, Book of"; "Creation"; "Cosmology"; "Sources of the Pentateuch"

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(MOB=Mobley: Dictionary of the Bible; NCAR=New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha)

UNIT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Who Is the Old Testament?
MOB: "Old Testament"
NCAB: [illegible] "Introduction to the Old Testament"

B. How Did We Get It?
MOB: "Bible (Canon)", "Scrolls, Library", "Tradition in the Old Testament", "Canon", "Apocrypha (Old Testament)"
NCAB: [illegible] "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible", "Books of the Bible"
MOB: [illegible] "Indice: Sin in the Apocrypha and Qumran Literature"
Bible: "1234-TEXAPP" "The Book of Daniel"

C. Why Study It?
MOB: "Bible in America", "Bible in Western Literature", "Literature, Bible as", "Bible, Authority of"
NCAB: [illegible] "English Versions of the Bible"

D. The Geography and Archaeology of the Old Testament World
MOB: "Ferrier's Geography", "Archaeology of Jerusalem", "Bible Atlas", "Bible in the Holy Land (Geography)", "Bible Lands, Geography of", "Archaeology"
NCAB: [illegible] "Survey of the Geography, History, and Archaeology of the Holy Land"

UNIT II: CREATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATION OF ISRAEL

A. Stories of Creation and Universe

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:4b-25
Answer questions [illegible]

NCAB: "Genesis, Book of", "Creation", "Cosmology", "Science of the Pentateuch"

2. Read Genesis 3-11
MDB: "Genealogy in the Old Testament"; "Generation"; "Fall"; "Serpent"; "Satan in the Old Testament"; "Cain and Abel"; "Flood"; "Babel, Tower of"

B. The Ancestors

1. Promise as a Literary-Theological Device
Read Genesis 12-23

MDB: "Ancestor"; "Patriarch"; "Promise"; "Abraham"; "Sarah"; "Hagar"; "Ishmael"; "Isaac"

2. Socio-cultural Background of the Ancestors
Read Genesis 24-36 and answer reading questions

MDB: "Family"; "Marriage in the Old Testament"; "Inheritance in the Old Testament"; "Women in the Old Testament"

C. Slavery, Liberation, and Covenant

1. Israel in Egypt
Read Genesis 37-50 and Exodus 1-2

MDB: "Joseph"; "Egypt"; "Exodus, Book of"

2. Africa and Israel's Beginnings
MDB: "Blacks in the Old Testament"; "Ethiopia"; "Nubia"; "Bible and Liberation Movements"

3. The Revelation of the Divine Name
Read Exodus 3

MDB: "Theophany"; "God Language, Inclusive";"God"; "God, Names for"; "Tetragrammaton";

4. Moses, the Plagues, and the Crossing of the Red Sea
Read Exodus 4-15

MDB: "Moses"; "Plagues"; "Red Sea/Reed Sea"; "Exodus"; "Miracles"

5. Covenant, Law, and Cult in the Old Testament
Read Exodus 19-25

MDB: "Covenant"; "Law in the Old Testament"; "Ten Commandments"; "Monotheism"; "Feasts and Festivals"; "Tabernacle"; ""Ark"; "Priests"; "Levi/Levites"

6. The Holiness Code
Read Leviticus 17-26

MDB: "Leviticus, book of;" "clean,unclean;" "holiness in the Old Testament;" "Homosexuality and the Bible"

7. Wilderness and the Paradox of Freedom
Read Exodus 16-17; Numbers 10-12 and 16

MDB: "Desert"; "Numbers, Book of"; "manna"
NOAB: xxxv-xxxvi OT "The Pentateuch"; 267-270 OT "The Historical Books"

UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

A. Land in the Biblical Tradition
Read Deuteronomy chapters 7-11 and 1 Kings 21

MDB: "Land"

B. Conquest and Settlement
Read Numbers 13-14; Joshua 1-8; Judges 1:1-2:5

MDB: "Conquest of Canaan"; "Canaan"; "Canaan, Inhabitants of"; "Land"
NOAB: 411-412 "The Israelite Settlement"

C. Learning to Live in the Land

1. The book of Judges
Read Judges 2:6-21:25

MDB: "Judges, Book of"; "Tribes"; "Amphictyony/Confederacy"; "Baal"; "Religions of the Ancient Near East: Canaanite Religion"

2. The book of Ruth
Read the book of Ruth and answer reading questions

MDB: "Ruth, Book of"

MUSIC: "Ceremony", "Law in the Old Testament", "Tar Sands Testimony", "Abraham's Faith", "Friends and Foes", "Tabernacle", "Altar", "Priests", "Levites", "Levite Cities"

B. The Holiness Code
Read Leviticus 17-26

MUSIC: "Leviticus: Book of", "Cleansing Days", "Holiness in the Old Testament", "Atonement and the Rites"

2. Wilderness and Leadership of Israel
Read Exodus 15-17, Numbers 10-12 and 16

MUSIC: "Desert", "Wilderness, Death of", "Manna", "Quail", "Wilderness of The Ponts Lucy: 20/-2/0 LIT "The Rational Gods"

UNIT III: ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

A. Land in the Biblical Tradition
Read Deuteronomy chapters 7-11 and 1 Kings 21

MUSIC: "Land"

B. Conquest and Settlement
Read Numbers 13-14; Joshua 1-8; Judges 1/1-2:5

MUSIC: "Canaan, Land of", "Caleb", "Gideon", "Israelite Militia", "Land"
NOAH: 4 11-12 "The Israelite Settlement"

C. Learning to Live in the Land

1. The Kings of Israel
Read Judges 2:6-1 Kings

MUSIC: "Judges, Book of", "Judges", "Amphictyonic Confederation", "Oath", "Religions in the Ancient Near East", "Israelite Religion"

2. The Book of Ruth
Read the book of Ruth and consider reading novels

MUSIC: "Ruth, Book of"

UNIT IV: BECOMING A GREAT NATION IN THE LAND

A. Samuel and Saul: The Beginnings of the Monarchy
Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 1:1-13:15
Answer reading questions

MDB: "Samuel, book of First and Second"; "Hannah"; "Samuel"; "Saul"; "Philistines"; "Ark"; "Kingship"
NOAB: 412-413 "The United Monarchy"

B. King David and His House
Read 1 Samuel 17-20 and 2 Samuel 1-18
Answer Reading Questions

MDB: "David"; "Succession Narrative"; "Bathsheba"; "Nathan"; "Jonathan"

C. Solomon and the Split of the United Monarchy
Read 1 Kings 3-12

MDB: "Solomon"; "Jeroboam I"; "Rehoboam"; "United Monarchy"

D. Israel's Wisdom Traditions
Read Proverbs 1-9 and Ecclesiastes 3
Answer reading questions on Proverbs 1-9

MDB: "Proverbs, Book of"; "Proverb"; "Ecclesiastes, Book of"; "Wisdom in the Old Testament"; "Wisdom Literature"

E. Israel's Poetic Traditions
Read Exodus 15:1-18; Psalm 22; Psalm 34, Song of Solomon

MDB: "poetry;" "Psalms, book of"; "Song of Songs"
NOAB" "Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry," pp.392-397

UNIT V: LOSING THE LAND

A. The Role of the Prophet in Israel
Read Deuteronomy 16:18--18:22
Answer introductory questions on prophecy

MDB: "Prophet"; "Prophetess"; "Prophecy"
NOAB: 862-865 OT "The Prophetical Books"

Patriarchal Narratives

They flesh out the genealogies of King David.

TAMAR-ONAN STORY

J

JACOB + ESAU BLESSING
JACOB AT "PILLAR" AT BETHEL
JACOB'S TWO WIVES

PARTING FROM LABAN - THEFT OF TERAPHIM
ANGEL AT PENUEL
(DINAH'S RAPE + SACK OF SHECHEM)

JOSEPH (JEALOUSY - FATHER)
JUDAH SAVES HIM, EDOMITES
EGYPTIAN GENTLEMAN (NOT EUN
POTIPHAR'S WIFE
JOSEPH + BROTHERS (2)

They tell why certain places were sacred to the Israelites in a time when most of the sacred places were in Judah.

E

JACOB + ESAU BLESSING
JACOB AT "PILLAR" AT BETHEL
JACOB'S TWO WIVES

PARTING FROM LABAN - THEFT OF TERAPHIM
ANGEL AT PENUEL
(DINAH'S RAPE + SACK OF SHECHEM)
JACOB ORDERS "STRANGE Gods" to be removed. (BETHEL)

BIRTH OF BENJAMIN (IN PALESTINE NOT NOMADIC)
JOSEPH (DREAMS - CONCEIT)
REUBEN SAVES HIM, MIDIANITES
EGYPTIAN EUNUCH, POTIPHAR
DREAMS
JOSEPH + BROTHERS (1)

D

J

JOSEPH'S CUP FOUND
JACOB'S MIGRATION TO EGYPT (PHARAOH DOES NOT KNOW ESTABLISHED IN GOSHEN FIRST)
JOSEPH BUYS LAND OF EGYPT FOR PHARAOH

E

JOSEPH REVEALS SELF TO BROTHERS
JACOB'S MIGRATION TO EGYPT
JACOB AT BEERSHEBA, TOLD SAFE TO GO TO EGYPT
(GOD NOT LIMITED TO ONE PLACE -)
JACOB'S DEATH - EGYPTIAN MOURNERS ABEL MIGRAIM (MOURNING OF EGYPT)
OTHER TRIBES FEAR JOSEPH'S RETALIATION
DEATH OF JOSEPH (ONLY HAPPY MAN IS DEAD ONE)

They are connected with rituals, beliefs, ceremonies

P.

Creation - Sabbath
Abraham - Circumcision
Flood - Permission to eat meat
Isaac - Animal (vs. Human) sacrifice
JACOB BURIED IN ANCESTRAL CAVE AT MACHPELAH
JACOB to PADAN ARAM - NO INTERMARRIAGE
SUMMARY OF THE 12 TRIBES.

the covenant
romises to offer Israel
failure to live in
will. Deut.
rain, crisis is the central concern
+ you
ead in
e your
e among

did not
f

voice, with
inai -
n tribes
an.

he treaty document
+ the periodic
d Tash Q/Bab)

enses

Covenant Ceremony

1. Assembly of Tribal leaders.
   (Ex 24:1, Josh. 24:1)
2. Confessional preaching affirming Jahweh's past deeds on behalf of the people.
   (Josh 24:2-13)
3. Call to commitment
   (Josh 24:14-15)
4. Recital of covenant stipulations
   (Ex 24:3b, Josh 24:25)
5. Pledge to observe stipulations
   (Ex 24:3b, Josh. 24:16-18, 21-22)
6. Pronouncement of curses + blessings
   (Josh 24:19-20, Deut. 27:14-16)
7. Setting up of commemorative pillars
   (Ex 24:4, Josh. 24:26b)
8. Covenant sacrifice + feast
   (Ex 24:5-11)
9. Dismissal of the people
   (Josh. 24:28)

For the tribes when the settled into Canaan + drew Canaanites to Jahweh worship, penitential rites replaced mourning rituals in the Book cults.

NAME: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #1

1. Identify Yahweh. _____

_____

2. Identify Elohim. _____

_____

3. How does the Exodus relate to the Christian communion? _____

_____

_____

4. What is the "four-source hypothesis" for the Hebrew scriptures?

_____

_____

5. What is the significance of the "habiru"? _____

_____

_____

Match the following:

_____6. Authorized Version	a. "...a nation as numerous as the stars"
_____7. Second covenant	b. First five books of the Bible.
_____8. Third covenant	c. Aramaic translation
_____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob narratives
____10. Saga	e. Flood narrative
____11. Etiology myth	f. Hebrew scriptures
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Pentateuch	h. Suzerainty treaty
____14. Papyrus	i. Palestinian deity
____15. Targum	j. King James
	k. Scroll material
	l. Moses infancy narrative

BONUS: With whom was the first covenant made and what was it's sign?

NAME: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #1

1. Identify Yahweh. _____

_____

2. Identify Elohim. _____

_____

3. How does the Exodus relate to the Christian religion? _____

_____

_____

4. What is the "four-source hypothesis" for the Hebrew scriptures?

_____

_____

5. What is the significance of the "Shalom"? _____

_____

_____

Match the following:

____6. Authorized Version	a. "...a nation as numerous as the stars"
____7. Second covenant	b. First five books of the Bible.
____8. Third covenant	c. Greekish translation
____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob patriarchs
____10. Gaga	e. Blood metaphors
____11. Biology myth	f. Hebrew authoress
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Pentateuch	h. Supercilicy treaty
____14. Satyrs	i. Palestinian deity
____15. Yargum	j. King James
	k. Sacrifi material
	l. Hosea infancy metaphors

BONUS: Who was the first covenant made and what was it's sign?

NAME: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #1

1. Identify Yahweh. _____

_____

2. Identify Elohim. _____

_____

3. How does the Exodus relate to the Christian communion? _____

_____

_____

4. What is the "four-source hypothesis" for the Hebrew scriptures?

_____

_____

5. What is the significance of the "habiru"? _____

_____

_____

Match the following:

_____6. Authorized Version	a. "...a nation as numerous as the stars"
_____7. Second covenant	b. First five books of the Bible.
_____8. Third covenant	c. Aramaic translation
_____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob narratives
____10. Saga	e. Flood narrative
____11. Etiology myth	f. Hebrew scriptures
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Pentateuch	h. Suzerainty treaty
____14. Papyrus	i. Palestinian deity
____15. Targum	j. King James
	k. Scroll material
	l. Moses infancy narrative

BONUS: With whom was the first covenant made and what was it's sign?

Name: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #2

1. Identify Jabbok: _____

2. Identify Eglon: _____

3. How does the Gospel reveal to the Philistine commander? _____

4. What is the "four-horned altar-shaped" for the Hebrew sanctuary? _____

5. What is the significance of the "tabret"? _____

Match the fulfillment

____ 6. Kadesh-Barnea version
____ 7. Second commander
____ 8. Third servant
____ 9. Leprosy
____ 10. Eyes
____ 11. Serpent eyes
____ 12. Tower
____ 13. Amalekites
____ 14. Moppets
____ 15. Tarsus

a. "Area region as dimensions are the state"
b. Altar item beside of the altar.
c. Absolute examination
d. Abiathar, Jonah, Doeg, Hallelujah
e. Blood sacrifices
f. Hebrew scriptures
g. Christianity
h. Mediterranean trees
i. Ancient Greek deity
j. Eglon Israel
k. Israelite Sanctuary
l. Moses injury deserving

NAME: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #1

1. Identify Yahweh. _____

_____

2. Identify Elohim. _____

_____

3. How does the Exodus relate to the Christian communion? _____

_____

_____

4. What is the "four-source hypothesis" for the Hebrew scriptures?

_____

_____

5. What is the significance of the "habiru"? _____

_____

_____

Match the following:

_____6. Authorized Version	a. "...a nation as numerous as the stars"
_____7. Second covenant	b. First five books of the Bible.
_____8. Third covenant	c. Aramaic translation
_____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob narratives
____10. Saga	e. Flood narrative
____11. Etiology myth	f. Hebrew scriptures
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Pentateuch	h. Suzerainty treaty
____14. Papyrus	i. Palestinian deity
____15. Targum	j. King James
	k. Scroll material
	l. Moses infancy narrative

BONUS: With whom was the first covenant made and what was it's sign?

NAME: _____

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
Quiz #1

1. Thematic Keyword: _____

2. Literary Genre: _____

3. How does the Bible relate to the Creation community? _____

4. What is the "Jesus-tower appropriate" for the Jesus scripture? _____

5. What is the significance of the "Daniel"? _____

Match the Twelve-Pet

____ 6. Alternated Drawing	a. "...is Datum an numerous as the sand
____ 7. Second Company	b. First five books of the Bible.
____ 8. Tried Journeys	c. Accepts transfer/on
____ 9. Longer	d. Nothing, takes, Jesus parables
____ 10. Sent	e. Food narrative
____ 11. Ritually with	f. Nonsense/supply
____ 12. Torah	g. Philadelphia
____ 13. Pentateuch	h. Quarterly Lesson
____ 14. Fathing	i. Relation/Quality
____ 15. Tetum	j. Main Jesus
	k. Spirit Prayers
	l. Above Authority Jerusalem

SEE NEXT PAGE OVERLEAF

MOST OF A YEAR

Psalm 78
105 > 8 plagues

Plagues

Plagues	J	E	P
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE
QUIZ #1

1. Identify Yahweh. _____

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2. Identify Elohim. _____

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3. How does the Exodus relate to the Christian communion? _____

_____

_____

4. What is the "four-source hypothesis" for the Hebrew scriptures?

_____

_____

5. What is the significance of the "habiru"? _____

_____

_____

Match the following:

_____6. Authorized Version	a. "...a nation as numerous as the stars"
_____7. Second covenant	b. First five books of the Bible.
_____8. Third covenant	c. Aramaic translation
_____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob narratives
____10. Saga	e. Flood narrative
____11. Etiology myth	f. Hebrew scriptures
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Pentateuch	h. Suzerainty treaty
____14. Papyrus	i. Palestinian deity
____15. Targum	j. King James
	k. Scroll material
	l. Moses infancy narrative

BONUS: With whom was the first covenant made and what was it's sign?

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Match the following:

____6. Northland Vocation	a. "...a Nation of Priests as the Ordered
____7. Second Creation	b. Israel fits best of the Bible.
____8. Third commandment	c. Promotion Prostitution
____9. Legend	d. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob patriarchs
____10. Sons	e. Tikva justice
____11. Sleeping Myth	f. Hebrew Scriptures
____12. Tanak	g. Philistines
____13. Forefathers	h. Sun-fatherly Liberty
____14. Hoplites	i. Fallen Angel Daily
____15. Torah	j. King David
	k. Social Weekly
	l. Moses Insane Prophets

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1. Identify Yahweh.

2. Identify Elohim.

3. Who does the Hebrew relate to the creation doctrine?

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5. What is the significance of the "Shema"?

Match the following:

_____6. Authenticated revision
_____7. Divine covenant
_____8. Sacred covenant
_____9. Sargon
_____10. Cyrus
_____11. Babylonian myth
_____12. Torah
_____13. Tanakh
_____14. Kingdom
_____15. Marduk

a. "I will return as Monarchs as the stars"
b. First five books of the Bible.
c. Mosaic Tradition
d. Jacobus, Israel, Jacob covenantism
e. Black obelisk
f. Hebrew Scriptures
g. Christian Bible
h. Neo-Babylonian Empire
i. Kingdoms
j. Zion Covenant
k. Sacred Scriptures
l. Hebrew authority documents

Bonus: Tell them why the first monotheistic God and what was it's name?

SEE NEXT PAGE OVERLEAF

MOST OF A YEAR

Psalm 78
105 > 8 plagues

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They flesh out the genealogies of King David.

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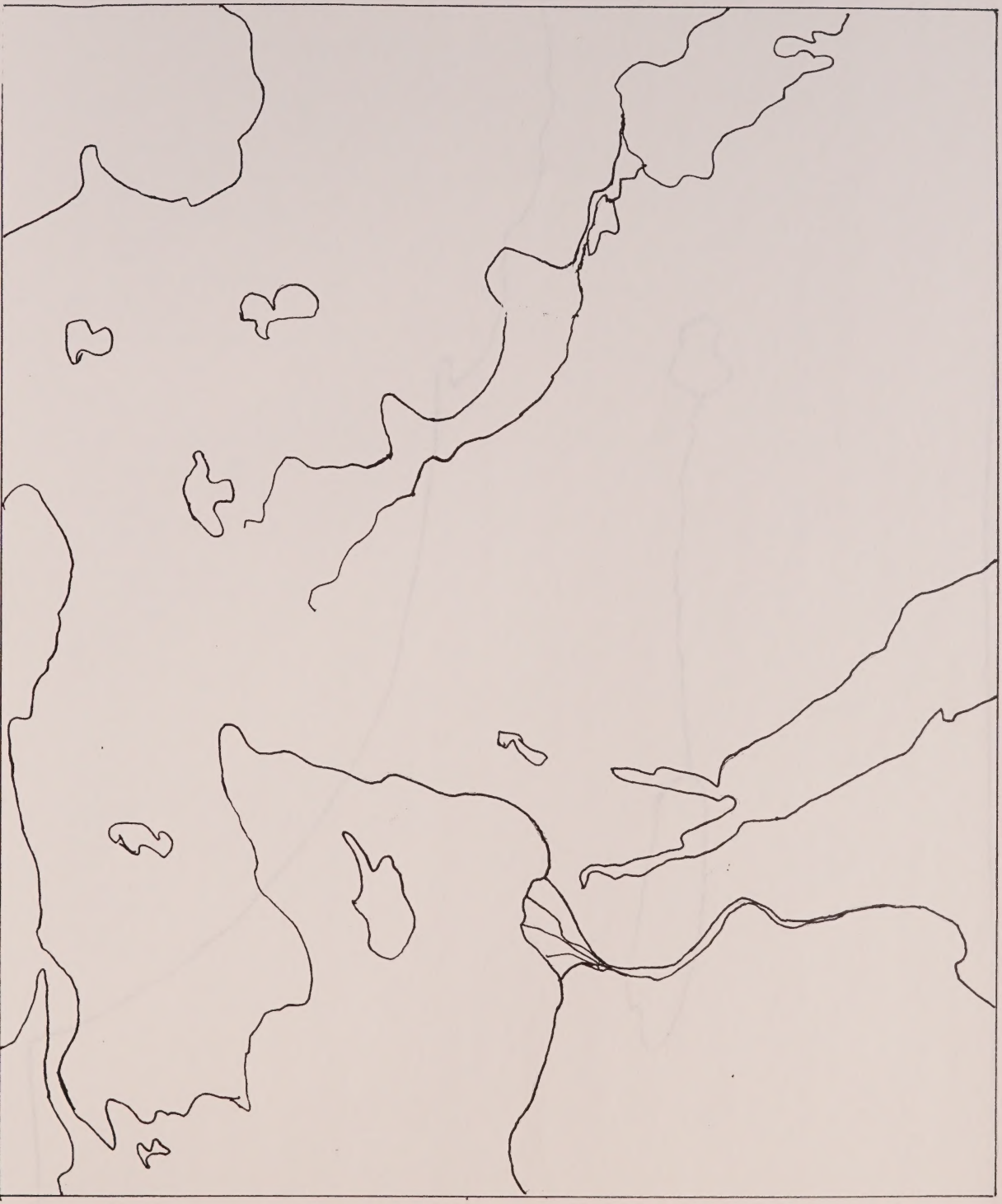

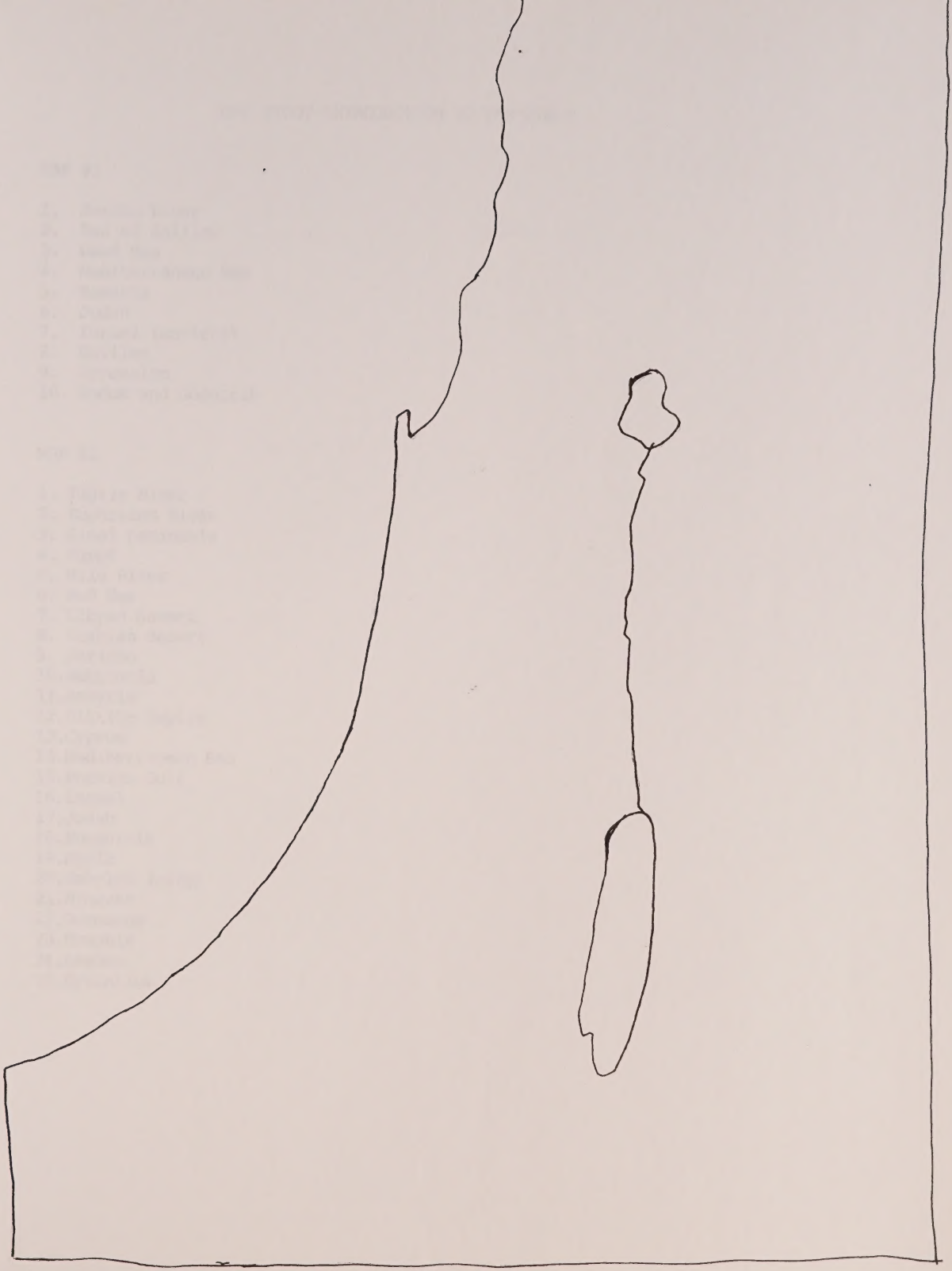

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8. Galilee
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4. Egypt
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7. Libyan desert
8. Arabian desert
9. Jericho
10. Babylonia
11. Assyria
12. Hittite Empire
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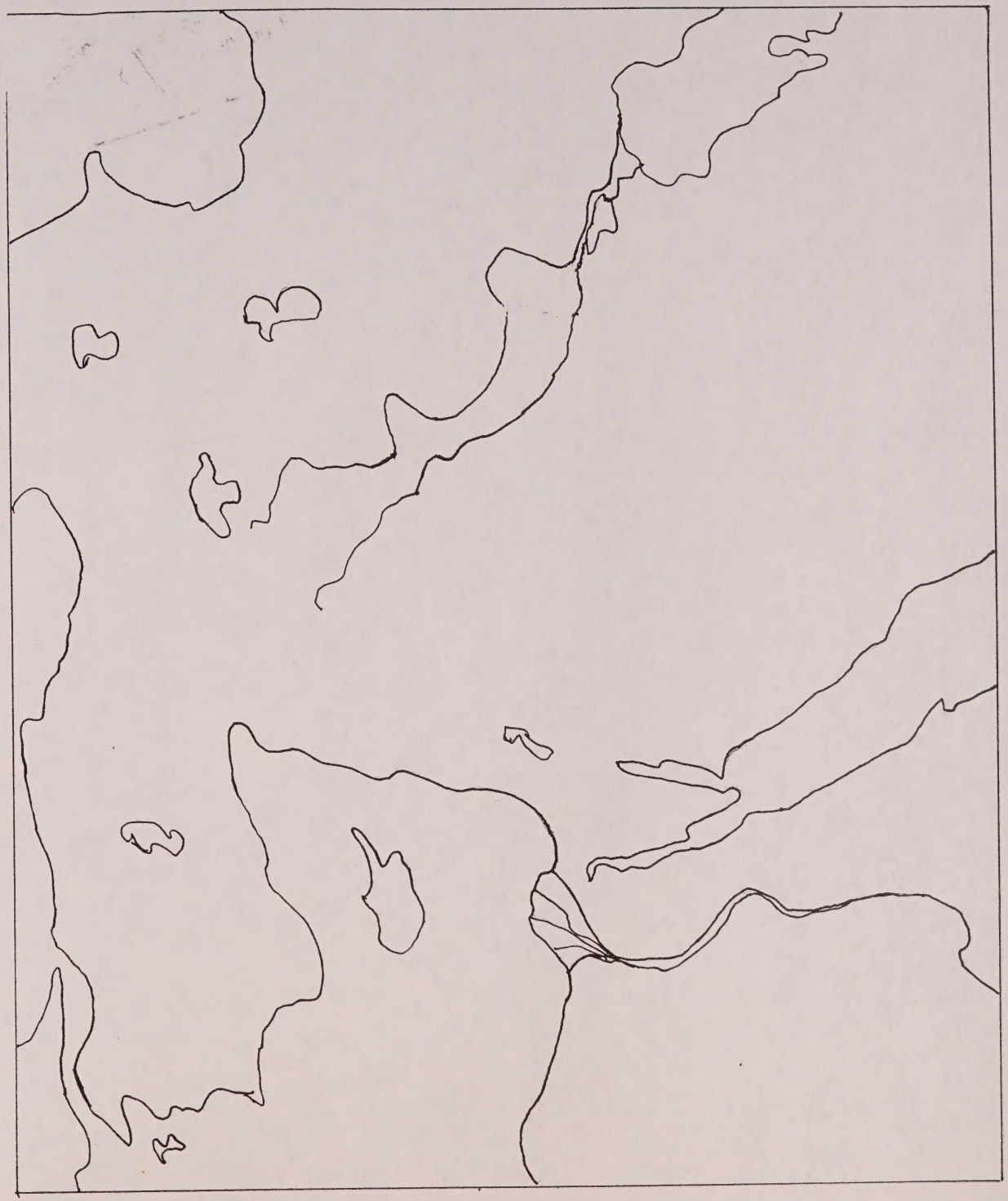

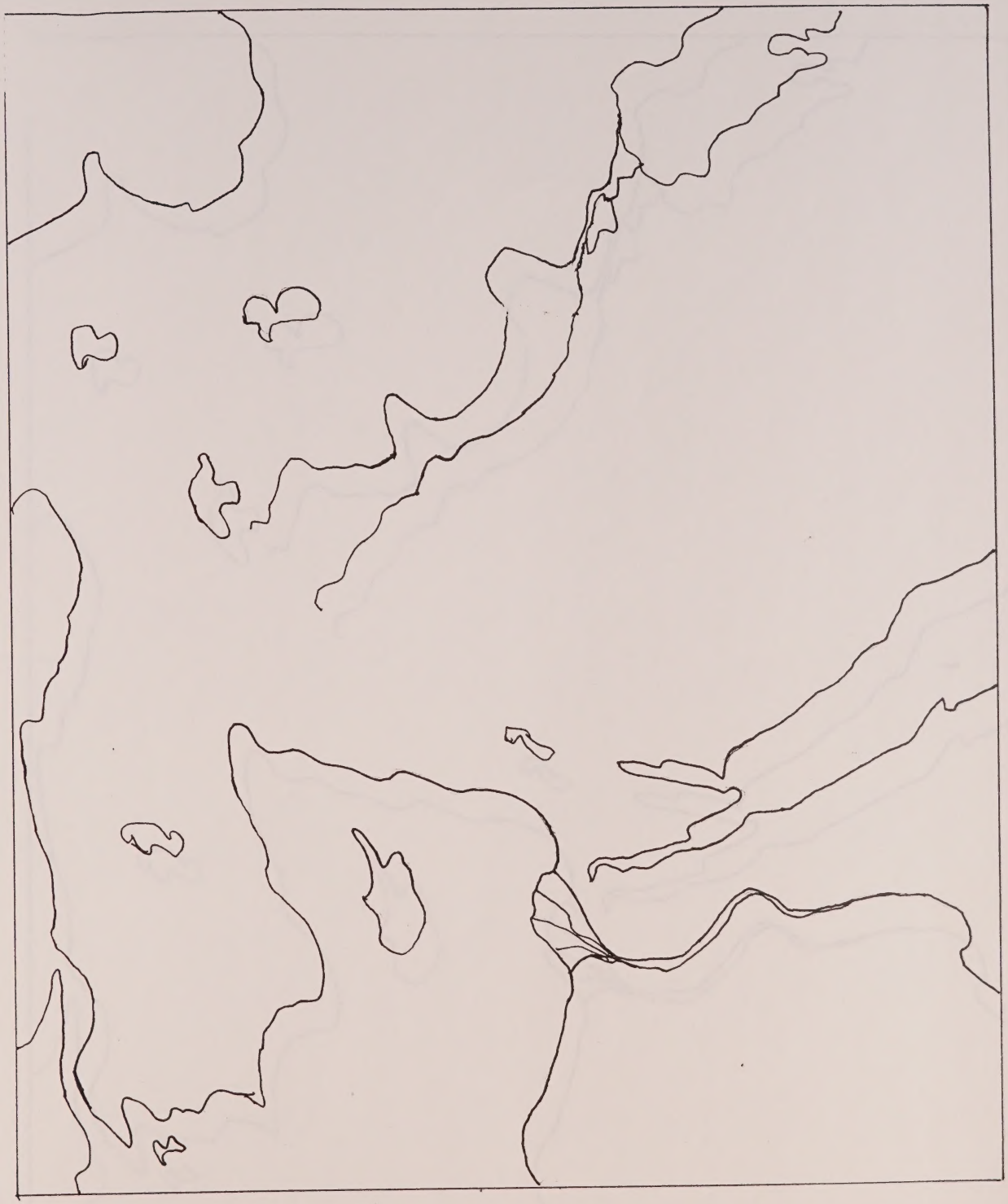

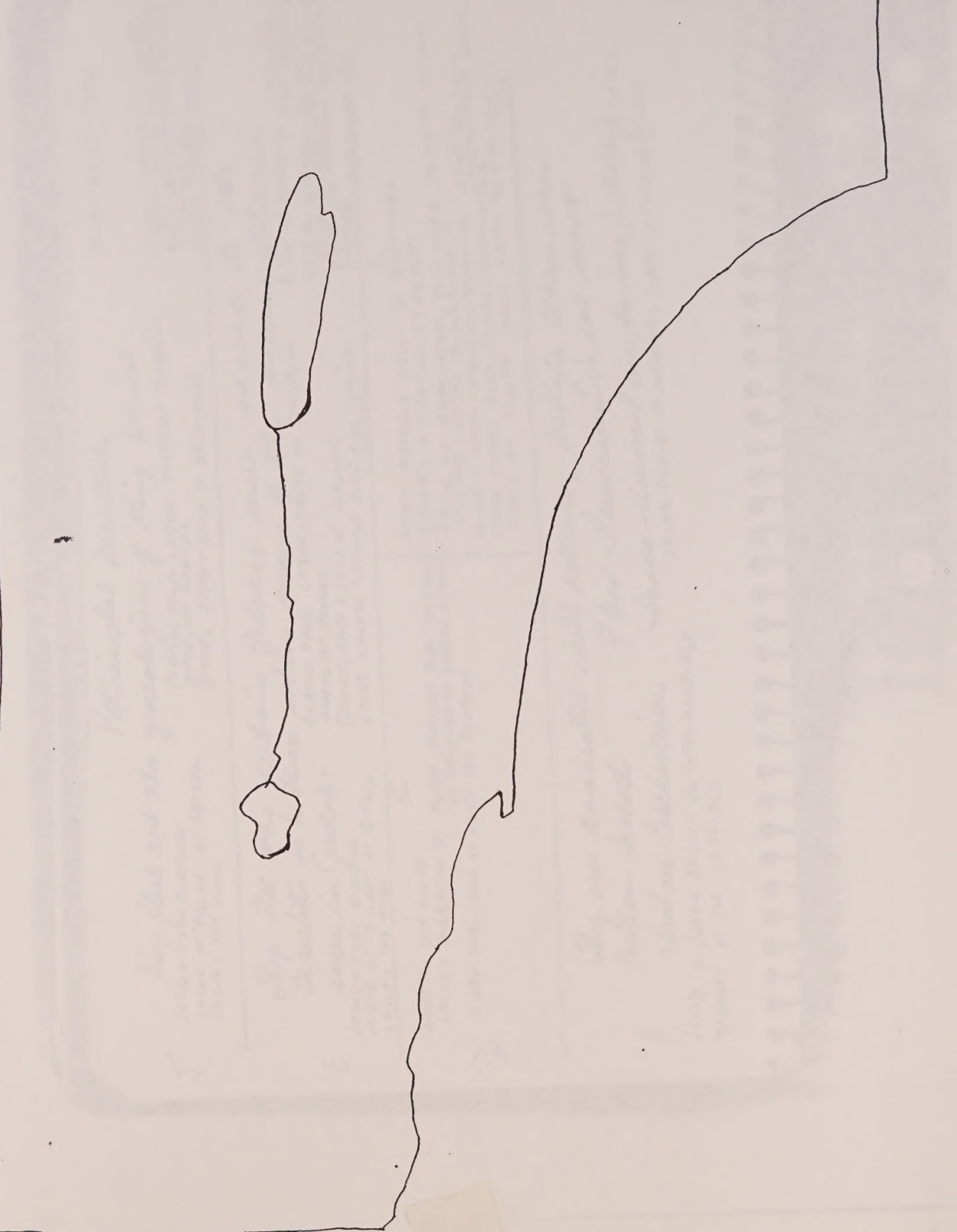

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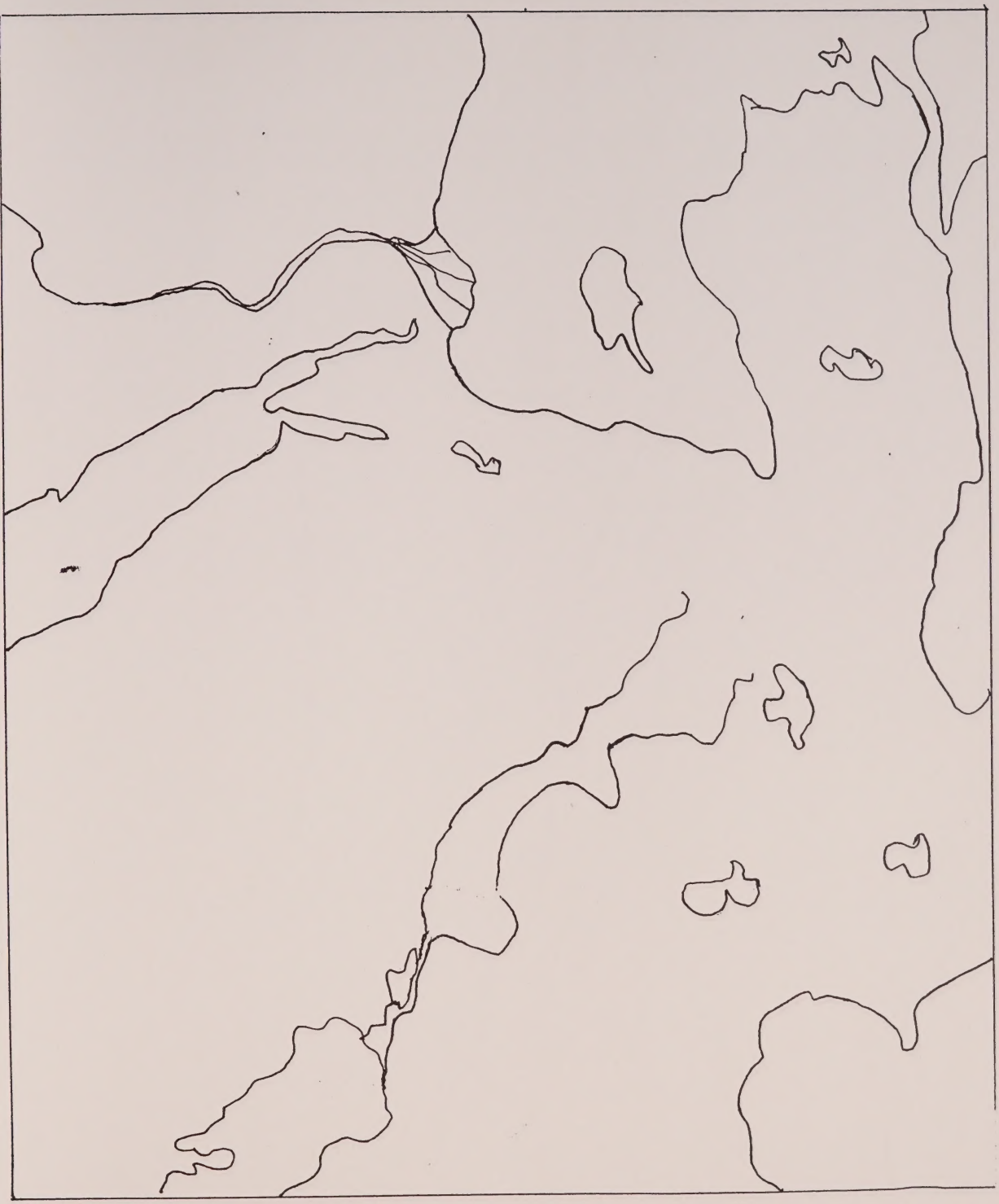

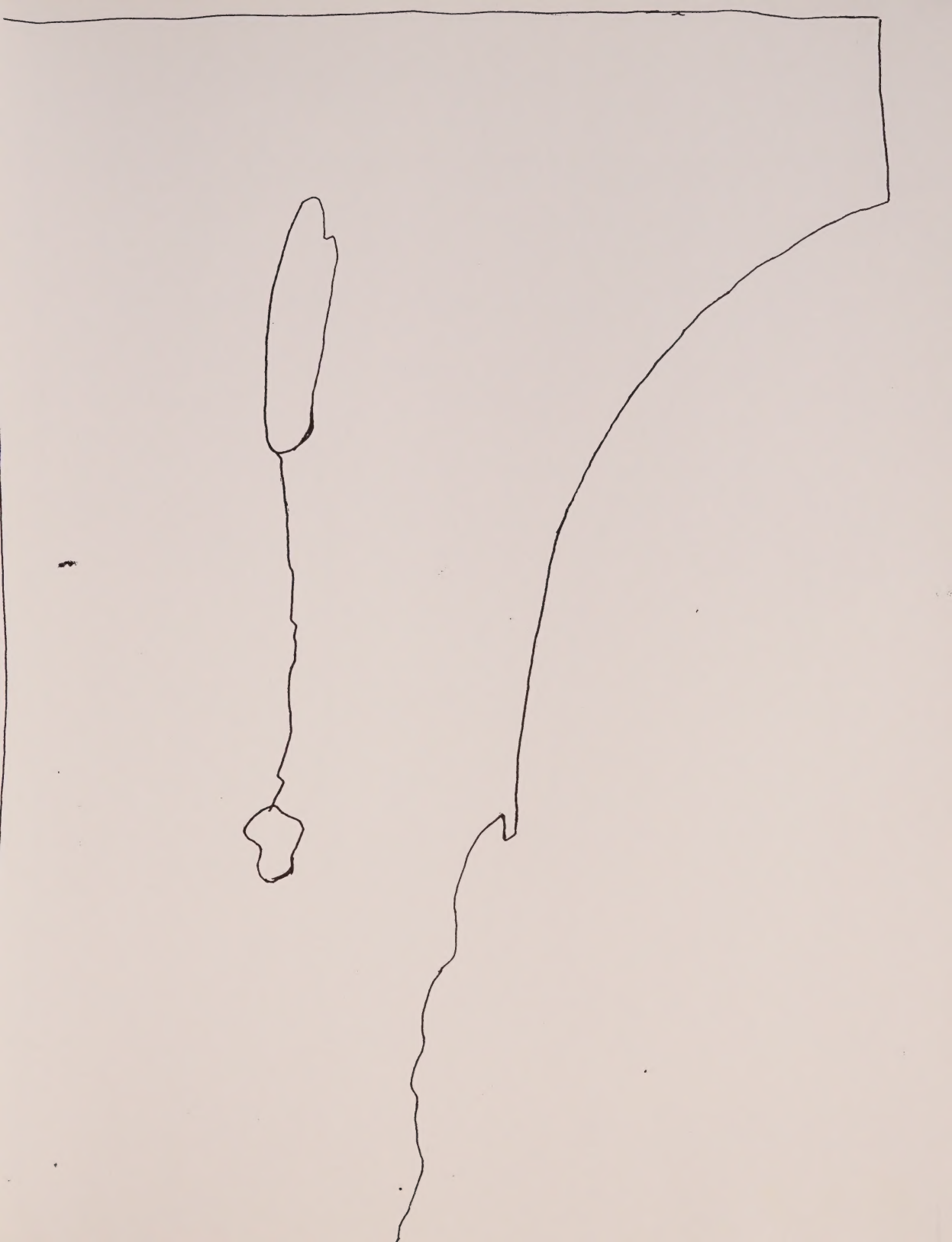

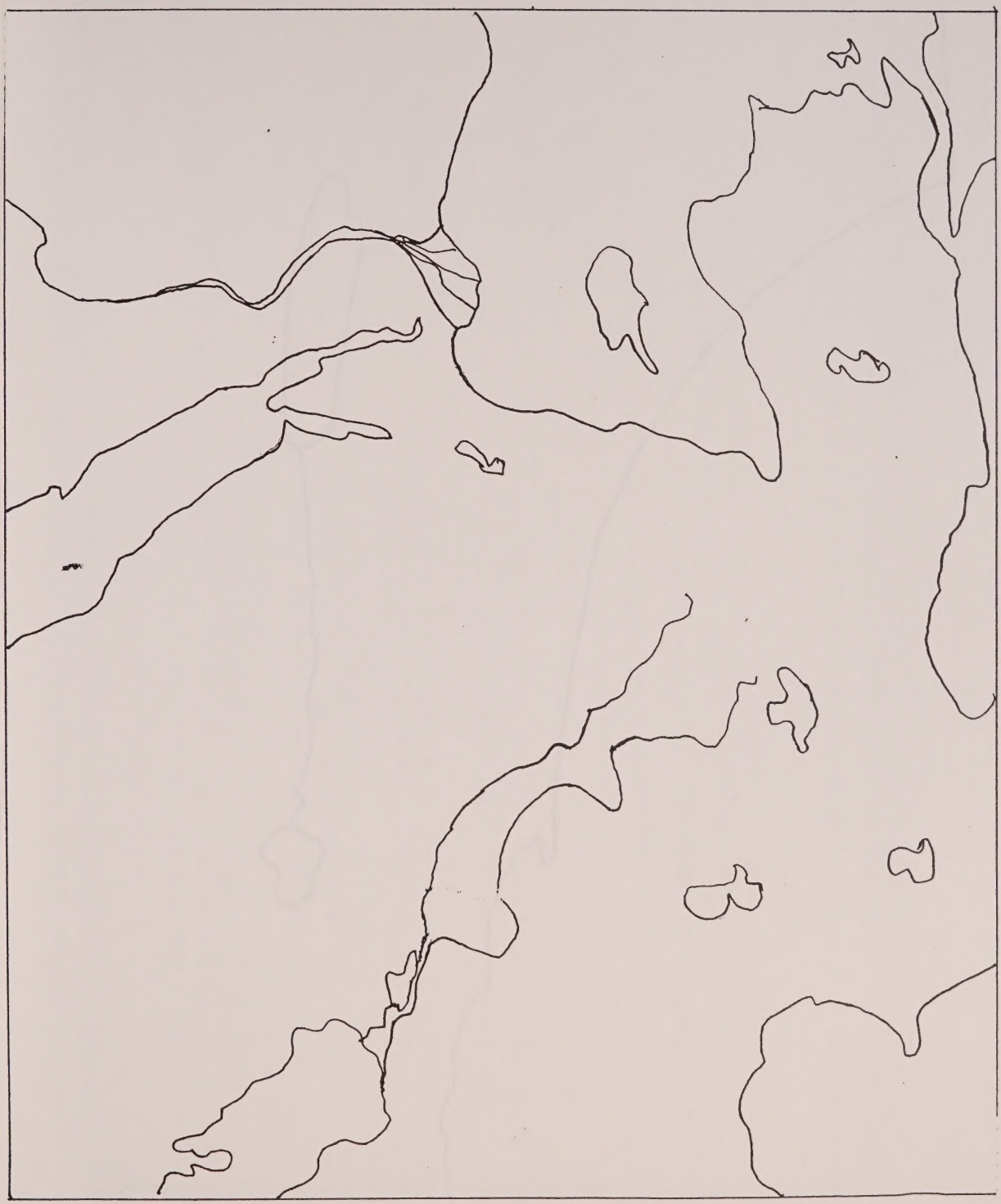

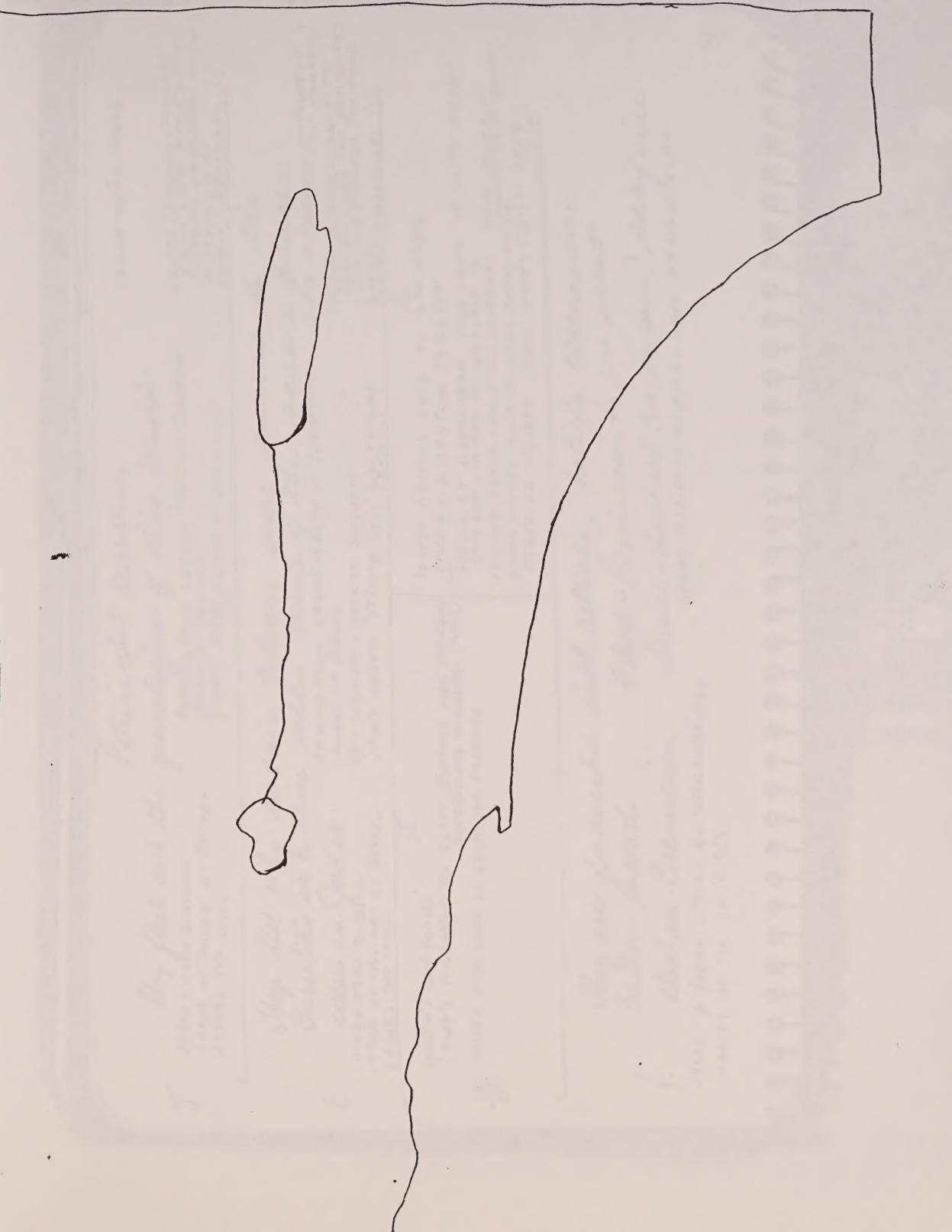

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JACOB to PADAN ARAM - NO INTERMARRIAGE
SUMMARY OF THE 12 TRIBES.

Flood - Permission to eat meat
Isaac - Animal (vs. Human) sacrifice
JACOB BURIED IN ANCESTRAL CAVE AT MACHPELAH

SEE NEXT PAGE OVERLEAF

MOST OF A YEAR

Psalm 78
105 > 8 plagues

Plagues

Plagues	J	E	P
1. Water to blood JUNE	7:14, 16, 17A 18, 24-25	7:15, 17b, 20b, 23	7:19, 20a, 21b, 22
2. Frogs	8:1-4, 8-15		8:5-7, 15b
3. Gnats-MOSQUITOES			8:16-19
4. Flies	8:20-32		
5. Cattle plague (MURRAIN) (POSS. SMALLPOX)	9:17		
6. Boils			9:8-12
7. Hail JAN? FOR KILLED FLAX & FEB. BARLEY WHEAT & SPELT	9:13, 17-18, 23b-24, 26-30, 33-34	9:22, 23a, 25-35	
8. Locusts JOEL 1 4-20 2 2-10	10:1-20	E in. 10:12-13a-20	
9. Darkness MARCH APRIL KHAMSIN WISDOM 17	J. in 10:24-26, 28-29	10:21-29	
10. Firstborn	11:4-8 12:29-30	11:1-3 12:31-32	11:9-10

J. recounts 7 plagues, (4 & 5 only in J), E has 5 plagues & 9 only in E. P has 5 - 3 & 6 are only in P.

Passover commemorates yearly the "Passing Over" of the angel of death & sparing Hebrews children

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5. The application of a verse may be determined by analagous circumstances or allegorical propriety (knowing the allegorical interpretation).

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The lion with eagle's wings = Babylon. bear with 3 ribs in his mouth = Medes; leopard with 4 heads = Persia (Cyrus, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius); figure with teeth of iron, 10 horns and a little horn = Greece (Alexander and his 9 successor, Antiochus is the little horn saying big things.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

Irene W. M. Hughes "A Medical Interpretation Among the Mandaean Ms. the Sacred Book of Life." Bibliotheca Archaeologica 24 (1931)p.47-71.

1. Conjuring with a view to a science of process and a human science of visual "Phenomena" in the mind's memory.

2. Since the product of its work cryptically, the meaning may long be accessible through a broken or abbreviated conservation of an antique text.

3. The product's meaning may be discovered through the study of marvel or archaeologic manifestations in the text — that is, the meaning dwelling upon material readings in the text.

4. A Central Meaning may also denote interpretation.

5. The application of a process may be determined by analogous circumstances or artistical property (showing the allegorical correspondence).

6. For Tall Jemmeh/Gerra, more than one reading may be accounted to the scribe's work.

7. Examining the property as conceived has meaning that measure be had in expressing "mean the same thing" for the world usage.

8. Connecting the matter meaning may have to be discovered by a comparison of the layers in the property usually used, so be analyzing matter meaning literally one or more of them found in the text.

9. Monitoring the property's meaning may be arrived at through dividing a word into two or more parts and separating the parts, while it may have been the product may have connected the meaning by conjecture.

10. Ethnic analogies of religious may illuminate the property's original meaning.

Bibliography/Chronological Works Including Epigraphers

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